Unknown virus strikes wealthy Ormoc clan

STORY BELOW, COLUMN 6

Palace relents: No work on May 1

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

MALACAÑANG restored yesterday the Labor Day non-working holiday to May 1 after meeting with representatives of moderate labor unions.

President Macapagal-Arroyo had earlier moved the Labor Day holiday to April 29, a Monday, in line with its "holiday

PALACE/A6

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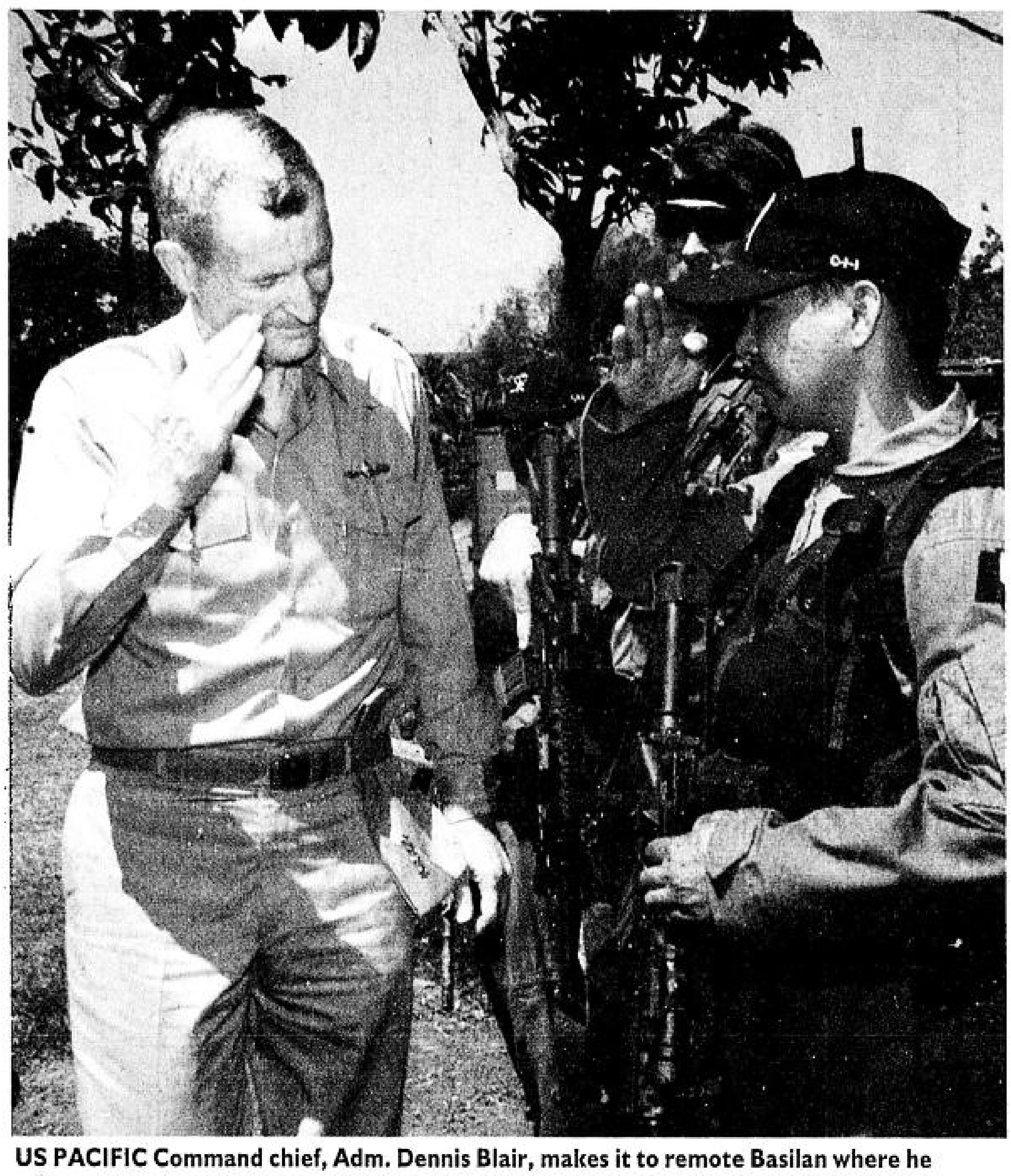
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Tuesday, April 16, 2002 ★★ 42 pages / 3 sections / vol.17 / no. 127 P15

Macapagal supports Balikatan extension



US PACIFIC Command chief, Adm. Dennis Blair, makes it to remote Basilan where he salutes a Filipino soldier on arrival at an Army camp in the provincial capital Isabela. REUTERS

Basilan residents want it, says GMA

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo is in favor of extending the American military presence in Basilan under the RP-US Balikatan exercises ostensibly because this is what the residents want.

"The residents themselves asked if the Americans could help finally (accomplish) the projects they have been longing for," such as roads and water systems, the President said in a radio interview yesterday.

Since the Balikatan is a regular military exercise, she said, "I don't mind if one of (its components) takes this (civic action form)."

US troops participating in Balikatan 02-1 got a big morale boost with the arrival yesterday in Zamboanga City of Adm. Dennis Blair, commander in chief of the US Pacific Command.

But Blair, who was accompanied by US Ambassador to the Philippines Francis Ricciardone, did not issue any statement after he stepped out of the tightly guarded Edwin Andrews Air Base.

Speculations were rife that the arrival of the two US officials signaled the release of Martin and Gracia Burnham, the American missionary couple whom the Abu Sayyaf has been holding hostage since May 27 last year.

But Capt. John Singly, spokesperson of the US Pacific Command, did not answer questions from reporters who tailed him. "It was nice to be here, we are happy to be here" was all he said.

Lt. Cmdr. Jeff Gordon, incoming spokesperson for Joint Task Force 510, said Blair was only visiting US troops to see how they were doing in the field.

Gordon also said the visit was "very significant" for the US troops. "It's very important for our armed forces to see our leadership come out and see us in the field. It's really great for our morale," he said.

Blair met with Gen. Diomedio Villanueva, chief of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, and US and other Philippine military officials before flying by helicopter to Basilan.

Maj. Cynthia Teramae, US spokesperson for the Combined Information Bureau, said a press conference would be

MACAPAGAL/A15

RUGGED, machinegun-toting US Special Forces soldier with a finger on the trigger escorts US Pacific Command Chief Blair in Basilan. REUTERS

'If US forces don't attack, we won't'

By Christine Avendaño
in Manila
and Delfin T. Mallari Jr.
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

THE COMMUNIST Party of the Philippines has not directed its military wing, the New People's Army, to attack American troops taking part in joint Balikatan war exercises with Filipino soldiers, Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo said yesterday.

Ocampo, former spokesperson of the National Democratic Front, was clarifying an INQUIRER report that CPP chair Armando Liwanag had directed the NPA to "inflict severe casualties on the invading US forces."

The directive of Liwanag, widely believed to be the *nom de guerre* of exiled CPP founder Jose Ma. Sison, was published in Ang Bayan, the official publication of the CPP Central Committee. Sison is currently based in the Netherlands.

Ocampo said that from his understanding, Liwanag's directive was for NPA guerrillas to prepare in the event US troops attacked them, purportedly as

IF/A6

Arafat to Powell: No way without Israeli pullout

RAMALLAH, West Bank—The meeting took three hours, but in the end Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat rebuffed Secretary of State Colin Powell's demand for an immediate halt to violence. Arafat's condition: Israel must first withdraw its troops from the West Bank.

The rebuff came on the heels of another setback for Powell, when Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon refused his demand last Friday to immediately pull out Israeli forces from key Palestinian areas.

After the Sunday meeting, a senior Palestinian official, Saeb Erekat, said Arafat had stood by his commitments, including an end to violence, but only after the Israelis take the lead. "Once the Israelis complete the withdrawal we will, as Palestinians, then carry out our obligations."

Palestinian Parliament Speaker Ahmed Quriea, who attended the meeting around a second-floor dining room table, was even more emphatic: "We told Secretary Powell that we shall not discuss any subject before Israel pulls out" from towns and villages occupied since March 29.

"We told him that it's time to speak about a Palestinian state along the lines" that existed before Israel occupied land seized during the 1967 Mideast war, Quriea said.

During the meeting, Arafat complained bitterly and extensively to Powell about Israel's military thrust into Palestinian-held towns and villages, and especially its actions in Jenin and a refugee camp in the town. (***See related story on Page A16.***)

Powell, in a short statement to reporters, called the Sunday meeting useful and constructive. A senior US official said

ARAFAT/A16

Unknown virus strikes wealthy Ormoc clan

By Jani Arnaiz
PDI Visayas Bureau

ORMOC CITY—A rare virus has afflicted 12 children—aged 3 to 15—of the prominent Larrazabal clan here who live in the family compound in Barangay Bantigue in this city.

One of four children who were brought to the family-owned Cebu Doctors Hospital in Cebu City was declared clinically dead on Sunday night.

Elsie Jaca, a nurse at the Ormoc City Health Office, identified him as Marcos Larrazabal II, who was a dirt motorcycle racing champion last year.

His sister, Erika, and cousins Miguel and Kolina Kangleon were still at the CDH after they were brought to Cebu City on Sunday night.

The eight other children were released last week after they were treated for sore eyes and high fever at the Ormoc Sugar Planters Association Medical Center in Barangay Can-adieng.

Jaca identified them as Melchor Larrazabal, 15; Camille Marie Cimafranca, 6; Maria Amale Larrazabal, 6; Michaela Larrazabal, 3; Txebi Kangleon, Alfonso Larrazabal, Ma. Lita Blanca Serafica and Martha Maria Serafica.

The children live in the MR Compound, which accommodates eight houses. The Larrazabal family breeds fight-

UNKNOWN/A16

Israeli terms: Face trial or go on exile

BETHLEHEM, West Bank—Over the weekend, Israeli forces placed more pressure on the 200-plus Palestinians holed up inside the Church of the Nativity. On Saturday night, soldiers played the sound of screaming sirens from a large speaker placed on a truck just outside the church. And then on Sunday, the Israeli government floated an extreme proposal to end the siege: The Palestinian gunmen either agree to face trial in Israel or accept permanent exile.

A Palestinian policeman inside the church denounced the proposal, and there were no signs of a breakthrough despite a series of plans that have been put forth.

"We will never accept being refugees in another country or surrendering to the Israelis," said policeman Mazan Hussein.

ISRAEL/A16

GMA private publicist out in the open

By Carlito Pablo

ON THE DAY Press Secretary and presidential spokesperson Rigoberto Tiglao went on a six-month leave starting yesterday, President Macapagal-Arroyo announced the appointment of Dante Ang as senior consultant for

GMA/A16

Boys of summer grit, bear it

By Cathy C. Yamsuan

LIKE big, brave men.

A traditional summer rite for Filipino boys who are at least 10 years old also tests their capacity for courage and their yearnings for manhood.

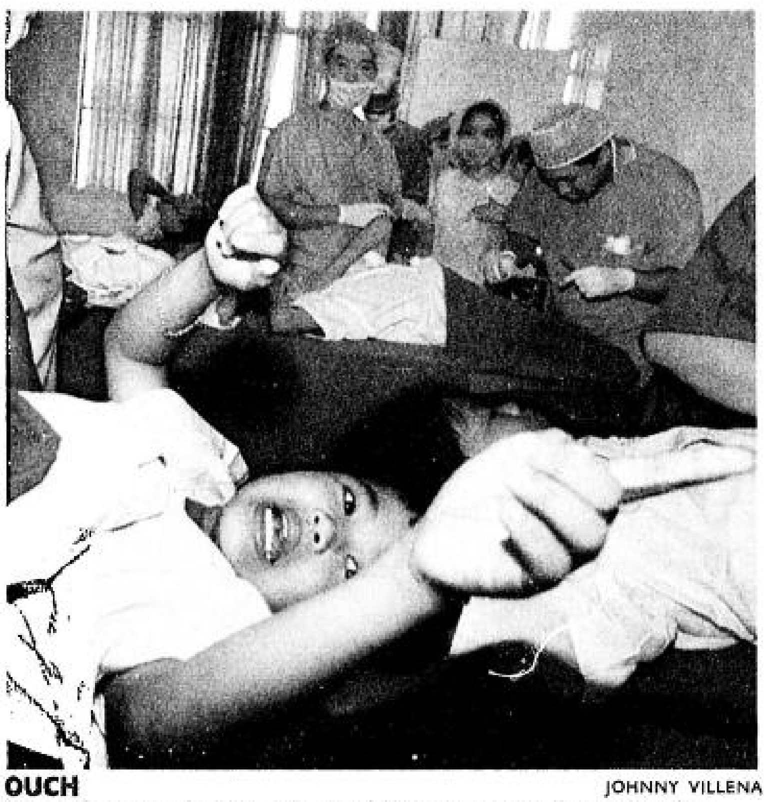
Circumcision is extremely painful, especially if anesthesia is not used like in the rural areas where the procedure is usually done by the riverbank. The male organ is sensitive and has many nerve endings. It often takes one week before the wound of circumcision heals.

Yet, rare is the boy who rejects this tradition. The exceptions would have to face the insults of those who went through the test.

Circumcision is done to better maintain the cleanliness of the male organ.

But is it necessary? There are millions of uncircumcised men the world over who are alive, well and are the embodiment of

BOYS/A6



OUCH JOHNNY VILLENA
Rites of passage for boys who would be men are performed at the Jose Reyes Memorial Hospital for free.

Second FRONT PAGE

MAY KARAPATAN DAW!

Gov't doc backs Erap stand

By Volt Contreras

A GOVERNMENT doctor has ironically added weight to jailed ex-President Joseph Estrada's petition to be allowed to leave for the United States to undergo knee surgery.

"It's the perfect right of a patient to look for a doctor who he thinks is best for him," Dr. Jose Pujalte Jr. of the state-run Philippine Orthopedic Center declared in court yesterday.

And even if ordered by the court to operate on Estrada, he would still need to get the patient's "consent," Pujalte said.

Upon cross-examination, however, Pujalte conceded that Estrada's knee surgery can be performed in the country, which has a "90 percent success rate" for such operations and with only a "2 percent infection rate."

In reply to another query, Pujalte said that as many as 15 local hospitals accredited by the Philippine Orthopedic Association could be capable of performing total knee replacement surgery.

State prosecutors, apparently surprised at finding that the witness was a health department employee, tried but failed to stop Pujalte from taking the stand.

"It is my opinion that the patient-doctor relationship is sacred, as the lawyer-client relationship is sacred," Pujalte said.

The justices posed several questions to Pujalte about the possibility of having Estrada treated in the country—either by Filipino or foreign doctors.

Estrada has maintained that he wants to be operated on only in the US by a medical team led by an American, Dr. Christopher Mow.

Also yesterday, the court granted a defense motion seeking to disqualify two state prosecutors, Alex Padilla and Dennis Villa-Ignacio who serve as undersecretaries of the health and social welfare departments, respectively.

The court ruled that Ombudsman Aniano Desierto's act of deputizing the two as assisting state prosecutors was "improper and inappropriate."

The court also granted the Estrada lawyers' request for a less hectic trial schedule.

Starting next week, hearings will be conducted only on Mondays and Wednesdays, although for a longer period—from 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

After a month-long gap, Estrada's plunder trial will resume tomorrow with prosecutors expected to present two "star witnesses—Equitable Bank executive Clarissa Ocampo and lawyer Manuel Curato—who testified at Estrada's impeachment trial that they saw him sign bank documents as "Jose Velarde."

The national police yesterday started beefing up Estrada's security detail at the VMMC in Quezon City because of a series of planned protest rallies by his supporters from April 19 onwards.

Members of the pro-Estrada People's Movement Against Poverty are staging a rally in front of the VMMC on Friday, Estrada's 65th birthday.

The rally will kick off a series of "pocket rallies" that will culminate in a march to Malacañang on May 1 to recall the violent Labor Day siege last year.

With a report from TJ Burgonio

Gloria says she's unfazed by falling rating

By Dona Pazzibugan

WITH her approval ratings down in the latest survey, President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday assured the public that she continues to work hard.

She said she keeps long work hours and goes out of Malacañang as much as possible.

"I really didn't have time to smell the flowers," she said, contradicting her own assessment at the start of the year.

At the time she said she wanted to make sure that the poor feel the effects of her work to improve the economy at the macro-level.

But the latest Social Weather Stations poll saw her net satisfaction rating go down by 11 points, from 27 to 16 points.

The Pulse Asia survey, however, showed that her net approval rating went up by three points, from 23 to 26 points.

"Whatever the survey results may be, I will continue to serve the people," she said in her weekly radio program yesterday.

"As I promised when I assumed office, I will serve honestly whatever happens and no matter what criticisms I get," she added.

She said although her SWS trust rating dropped, "in general the results were good because majority of our people gave me their political support."

She said one of the reasons behind the decline in her SWS rating is that the people are impatient to see economic improvement.

She said her daily work routine is as thus: She attends to her public meetings from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

From 3 p.m. to 7 p.m., she devotes herself to "study, write and plan."

After 7 p.m., she said she attends to social and ceremonial dinners.

She said she only reserves Sunday for "private time" with her family.

In fact last Sunday, she and First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo went to watch the Hollywood movie, "Showtime," at SM-Manila City Hall. The President also denied that she will revamp the Cabinet as a result of the SWS and Pulse Asia surveys.

FVR heads Boao forum

FORMER President Fidel Ramos was unanimously elected chair of the Boao Forum for Asia during the forum's 1st Annual Conference held over the weekend in its headquarters in Boao, a popular tourist resort, located in the east coast of Hainan, China.

Ramos, who arrived Sunday night is the very first chair of the BFA—dubbed as the "Asian Forum" and the continent's answer to Europe's Davos World Economic Forum.

The BFA, according to a press release from Ramos' office, was envisioned to shape Asian perspectives and promote primarily the development goals of Asian countries through regional economic integration—a concept shared and pursued by its founders, Ramos of the Philippines, former Prime Minister Bob Hawke of Australia and former Prime Minister Morohiro Hosokawa of Japan.

Boao Forum for Asia, a non-governmental and non-profit international organization initiated by 26 countries, was formed to find a permanent site to hold critical conferences on a regular basis—a concept similar but in itself distinct to the Davos World Economic Forum.

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‘Agimat’ still works for Revilla

By Rocky Nazareno

SEN. Ramon Revilla’s amulets proved strong again.

The former movie action star known for the amulets that supposedly protected him both onscreen and off, Revilla has just faced delicate spinal surgery and emerged unscathed.

Now a seating senator and the second oldest one at that at 75, Revilla underwent the operation in the neck region at the Stanford University Medical Center in California last Thursday and is reportedly recuperating well.

“*Mukhang mabisa pa rin ang agimat ni* Daddy (It looks like Daddy’s amulets are still powerful),” said Revilla’s son, former Cavite governor Ramon “Bong” Revilla Jr. in a statement.

The younger Revilla, himself an actor, said his father had been complaining of “lingering neck and upper back pains.”

During a Holy Week break in the US, the senator experienced intermittent pain, which prompted him to go to Stanford.

After an examination, doctors found he had torn ligaments and fissures in his upper spinal column and advised immediate surgery.

“(The physicians) were concerned that slight to moderate trauma in the affected region could cause partial or total paralysis as the fissures could crack and damage nerves in the spinal cord,” Bong Revilla said.

Since the operation, he said, his father has been instructed by his doctors to “take a complete bed rest.”

“So far, he is doing very well and the doctors don’t see any complications arising from the operation” he said. “So far, his amulets haven’t lost any of their powers.”

From his sickbed, Revilla had this message for his constituents: “Don’t worry, I’ll be back to finish my term.”

Revilla is on his second and last term which ends in 2004.

VELASCO

Promoted PNP deputy takes oath

REYNALDO Velasco, the director for comptrollership of the Philippine National Police, has been promoted to deputy director general, a rank that is the equivalent of a three-star general in the Armed Forces.

Interior Secretary Jose Lina and PNP Director General Leandro Mendoza had recommended Velasco for promotion, citing his exemplary record as an administrator and field commander.

The promotion was announced by President Macapagal-Arroyo herself last Saturday and Velasco took his oath before the President yesterday.

Mendoza said that Velasco had participated in the planning and execution of the police officers’ withdrawal of support from deposed ex-President Joseph Estrada during the second people uprising in January 2001.

He also cited Velasco’s role in defending the Macapagal administration at the height of May 1 siege of Malacañang last year by pro-Estrada forces, and the arrest of Estrada and his son.

Velasco is the most senior among the PNP directorial staff, having served in the logistics, planning and comptrollership divisions.

He was promoted to two-star rank in December 1998. *Ma. Criselda Yambot*

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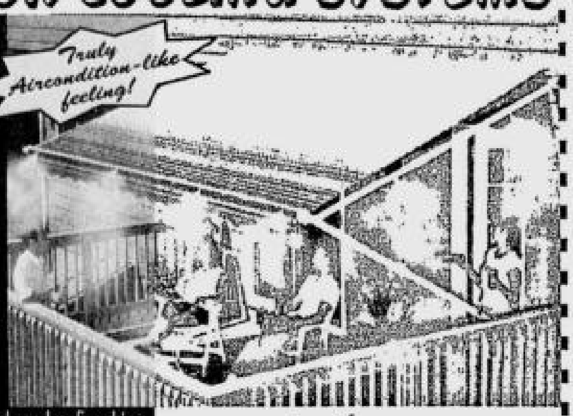

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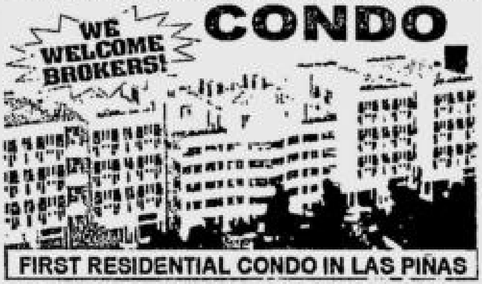

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RP fruits vs Aussie milk: Trade war looms

By G. Cabacungan Jr.

THE PHILIPPINES is poised to pull the trigger in a trade war with Australia after Filipino businessmen pledged to support a ban on Australian dairy products if that country continues to disallow the importation of Philippine bananas, pineapples and mangoes.

Presidential adviser on jobs generation Luis "Cito" Lorenzo Jr. said Filipino milk importers have agreed to tap suppliers in New Zealand and Europe for their milk solids and powder.

"Most milk importers, including Nestlé and Alaska, have agreed to come together at the proper time should Australia continue to block our fruit exports," said Lorenzo. He admitted, though, that Nestlé and Alaska have supply contracts with Australia up to the end of the year.

"Both Nestlé and Alaska are sympathetic to the plight of the local tropical fruit industry in its bid to gain market access and fair trade in Australia," Lorenzo said.

Agriculture Undersecretary Ernesto Ordoñez said the government has no plans to initiate a ban on Australian dairy products, to avoid sanctions from the World Trade Organization.

"Any action against Australia is likely to be privately led, especially if the Australians fool around with the risk analysis or retract on their commitment. So far they are cooperating," Ordoñez said.

Milk market

The Philippines is one of Australia's biggest markets for milk, butter and cheese worth a total of A$370 million last year.

Lorenzo said Philippine banana exports to Australia alone would generate A$300 million annually.

Australia, which has blocked the entry of Philippine fruits alleging these were rife with disease, has committed to complete a quarantine study on imports of Philippine fruits by June 30.

Lorenzo, who is also chair and CEO of Lapanday Holdings, a large banana and pineapple producer, said the only way the country could engage Australia in a trade war is to have a united local business community, much like the Australians who are united on certain trade issues.

"Fortunately, Filipinos have found their trade patriotism in dairy imports, like they did for beef imports from Australia," Lorenzo said.

The government had banned the importation of live cattle from Australia in 2000, a move supported by Filipino livestock traders, in retaliation for Australia's restrictions on Philippine fruits.

Banana support

Lorenzo decried the Australian government's unflinching support for its banana industry, which produces only 250,000 tons a year compared to the Philippines' 3.5 million tons.

"The Australian government could be helping a much bigger community by increasing imports of Philippine fruits that are produced in poverty-stricken areas in Mindanao," Lorenzo said.

He said the Australian government need not worry about losing its tiny banana industry because Philippine fruit exporters could sell to Australian farmers' cooperatives.

"We are not out to kill the Australian fruit industry. We just want to give Australians more choices on their supermarket shelves, much like in our own stores," Lorenzo said.

Now it's tourism eco zone

By Jerome Aning

TOURISM Secretary Richard Gordon wants "tourism economic zones" created to counter the anticipated decline of country's special economic zones.

The TEZs will be "new investment vectors" centered around vital tourist spots in the country, Gordon told a gathering of University of the Philippines alumni in Baguio City last week.

The tourism chief said he anticipates the decline of SEZs in the country owing to China's accelerating "economic onslaught."

Gordon said China had started luring manufacturing and related industry investments from the Philippines and other Asian countries.

"Soon enough, China is going to corner more of the investments traditionally coursed through the Philippines, and we will lose more and more of investments," he said.

He warned that many special economic zones in the country would soon find business diminishing.

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To our valued clients, most especially
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The first-ever collective negotiations at the Land Bank of the Philippines started in October 2001. Five months later, on March 21, 2002, we officially declared deadlock in negotiations when management refused to address the iniquities in the present compensation plan for LBP rank-and-file employees.

The New LBP Charter (R.A. 7907), enacted in February 1995, allows the LBP Board to approve compensation and emoluments for its employees. However, bank management has used the New Charter to grant basic hiring rates to LBP rank-and-file employees which are much lower than the hiring rates (for equivalent positions) under R.A. 6758, otherwise known as the Salary Standardization Law or SSL. Management also gives lower allowances than what are provided for under existing legislature.

On the contrary, we know of a vice-president in LBP who receives a basic pay of P75,000 per month; and a first vice-president who receives P200,000 per month. These amounts clearly violate the limit of "not exceeding two times" SSL rates, as stated in Malacanang Memorandum Order No. 20. These also do not yet include their allowances, perks and tax shields. And how much more for our senior vice-presidents, executive vice-presidents and the bank president? Management keeps the salaries and allowances of our bank officers confidential, and maintains their payroll account at the Bank of Philippine Islands.

When we entered into the CBA negotiations, we were hopeful that management would take the chance to rectify this unjust situation. We are emboldened too by the fact that the bank earned P1.5 billion in CY2001, from the blood, sweat and tears of our ranks. Moreover, the bank remains to be among the top five in the industry.

Sadly, our management chose to be deaf to our pleas that our salaries and benefits be made not inferior to those received by our counterparts in other government agencies, especially those in the other government financial institutions. This is not surprising of course as those who live in leisure and who do not experience the difficulties of the rank-and-file employees in making both ends meet, can really be miserly.

Management has pushed us against the wall. At this point, we have no recourse but to militantly demand for justice through peaceful, concerted activities. We shall continue to fight for a just and reasonable CNA.

We write you now, our valued clients, not only to tell you our very sad story.

We write you now, fellow government workers and employees, public school teachers, public health workers, comrades in the police and military service, and agrarian reform beneficiaries, to help us in this just fight of ours. We know that you understand our plight very well as it is not different from yours. And we know that in many creative ways you can help us let our management see that it is really wrong to treat us unfairly.

But, most of all, we write you now, valued clients, so that you may bear with our human frailties in these trying times. Rest assured, however, that we are committed not to have our concerted actions get in the way of our members' jobs to render public service as much as possible. We are steadfast in our resolve to fight for justice but we remain deeply committed to serve you well.

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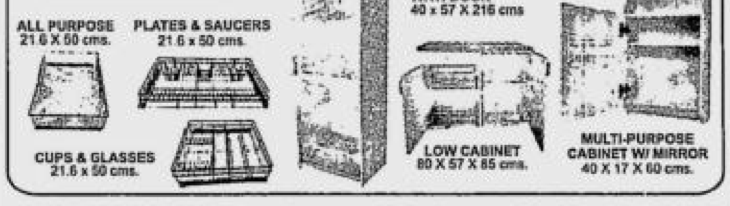
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Not yet El Niño, but…

By G. Lacuarta

THE WEATHER bureau has noted a significant rise in Pacific Ocean surface temperatures, but climatologists said it was too early to tell if the El Niño phenomenon had set in.

"It is likely the condition represents the early stages of El Niño, but this will be confirmed in the coming months," said Anthony Lucero, a weather specialist at the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration.

Lucero said a persistent rise in temperatures over the equatorial Pacific Ocean, the so-called "El Niño belt," indicates the arrival of the warm weather pattern. Experts had predicted a mild El Niño would set in the third quarter of the year.

"It is too early to tell if the condition represents El Niño in its early stages. It is possible that temperatures will still drop," Lucero said.

He said developments with regard to El Niño will be closely monitored and regular updates will be issued.

El Niño is a large-scale oceanographic and meteorological phenomenon that develops in the Pacific Ocean and is associated with extreme climatic variability, like devastating rains, winds and drought. It is the migration, from time to time, of warm surface waters from the western equatorial Pacific Basin to the eastern equatorial Pacific region, along the coasts of Peru and Ecuador.

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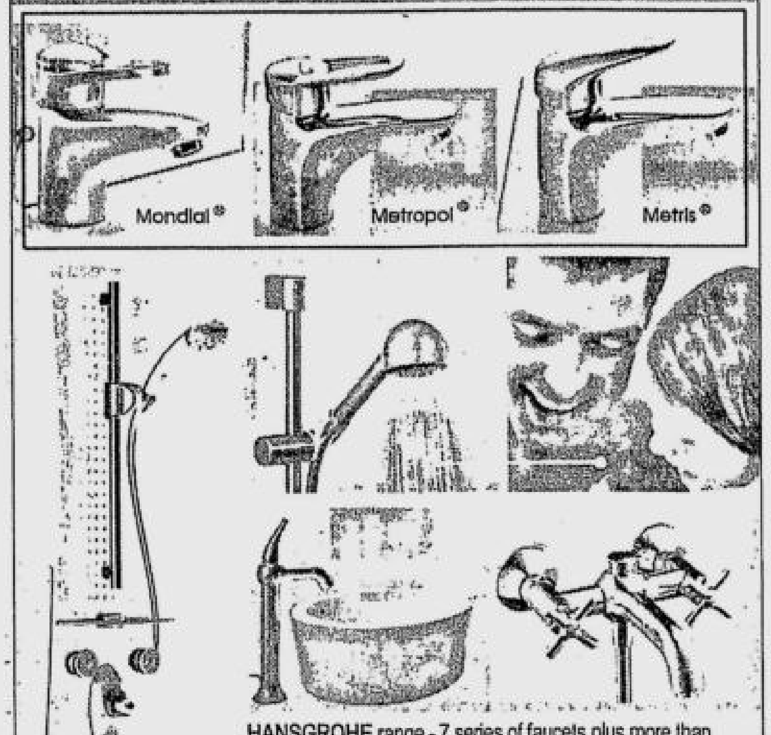

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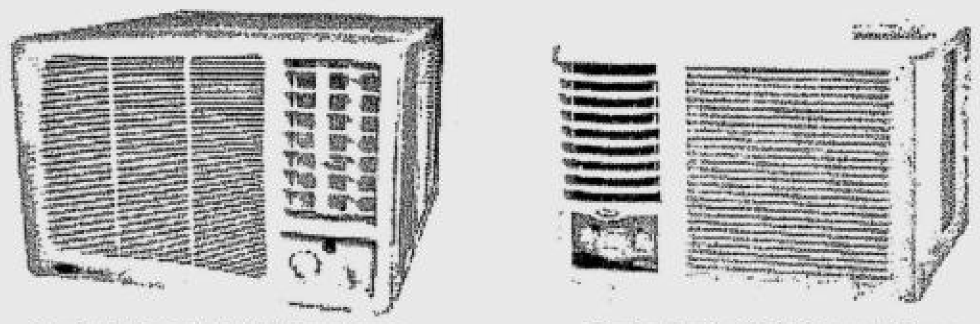

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Employers group says no to Cha-cha

By Armand N. Nocum,
Juliet L. Javellana
and Rocky Nazareno

THE EMPLOYERS Confederation of the Philippines (Ecop) yesterday registered objection to the proposed amendment of the 1987 Constitution, saying this should be done only after the economy had turned around.

"This is not the time to initiate Charter change. We have to focus on the real problem, which is poverty alleviation and economics," Ecop president Donald Dee said in a statement.

Dee was echoing President Macapagal-Arroyo's earlier comment that lawmakers should consider amending the Constitution only after they had approved her priority bills and after the problem of poverty had been licked, perhaps in 10 years. He was also reacting to claims of both senators and congressmen that there was increasing support for Charter change.

At yesterday's resumption of Congress sessions, Isabela Rep. Rodolfo Albano delivered a speech denouncing the President for her "cavalier dismissal" of moves in the House of Representatives to push for Charter change.

"Since Congress is a co-equal branch of government, we must also remind the President not to treat Congress as a lapdog that can be coached to perform tricks at her convenience," Albano said.

"It is unbecoming for the President to parlay her support for constitutional change as a carrot to extort compliant behavior from Congress in passing her priority bills. This is political '*kotong*' (extortion) at its most vulgar," he added.

Charter change through a constitutional convention (Con-Con) will cost the government at least P2 billion, but senators agree that the steep amount will actually be lesser than the "political costs" that will result from Congress acting as a constituent assembly.

Lawmakers had been pushing for the shift from the present form of government to the parliamentary or federal system.

But Dee said that while the present system was "not a perfect structure," the solution was "change the mindset of the people," not the Constitution.

He cited recent surveys showing that the concern of the citizenry was focused on the economy.

The right time to push for Charter change is "when the country is moving forward or when the economy turns around," Dee said.

He admitted that the business community was amenable to possible changes in the Constitution, but only if this involved "economic issue."

P2 billion

Sen. Ralph Recto said the P2-billion estimate was "still on the conservative side" because the House committee on appropriations had already pegged the costs of the Con-Con at P3 billion.

"The public will eventually foot the bill on the process, whose benefits are not yet explained to them clearly," Recto said in a statement.

Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. said initial talks among the opposition senators showed that most of them were inclined to adopt the Con-Con route.

"We want Charter change immediately and are pushing for a Con-Con," he told reporters yesterday after emerging from a minority caucus at the Senate building.

Pimentel pointed put that while a constituent assembly would be "more manageable," giving Congress the power to amend the Charter would have "more political costs."

He also said Charter change would hinge on "whether President Macapagal-Arroyo wants it or not."

"If not, nothing will come to pass," he said.

Sen. Edgardo Angara, chair of the Senate committee on constitutional amendments, revision of codes and laws and electoral reforms, said the panel would now start to "gather all the resolutions and schedule them for public hearing so that we can feel the real pulse of the people."

Sen. Francis Pangilinan had earlier filed Senate Resolution 266 calling for the creation of a Con-Con to "propose amendments to, or revision of, the 1987 Constitution."

Under the resolution, the election of delegates to the Con-Con will be held simultaneously with the national elections on the second Monday of May 2004.

Each legislative district will elect two delegates "who shall take office beginning June 30, 2004, until they shall have concluded the work for which the convention has been called."

But Recto said that "even if the Con-Con delegates' election will piggyback on a regular national election, it would still entail additional cost."

"It won't come free, in addition to complicating the election it would coincide with," he said.

But Recto pointed out that "if the government's investment in Charter change can be recouped by new provisions that will improve the economy, (then) the expenses will be worthy expenditures."

Albano said the President should be reminded "that she does not have the power to dictate whether or not the Constitution will be amended."

He said that the war against poverty had been waged since the birth of the republic but that no president had made it a condition to constitutional amendments.

Palace blinks: No work on May 1

From page A1

economics" policy of giving workers three-day weekends whenever possible.

It would have been the first time that Filipino workers would report for work on May 1, which is celebrated worldwide as Labor Day.

Ms Macapagal's decision last week to move this year's Labor Day celebration earned widespread disapproval from various labor organizations and cause-oriented groups.

The President's decision even became a butt of jokes among texters who exchanged messages that the President was also moving the celebration of Christmas from Dec. 25, a Wednesday, to Dec. 23, a Monday.

Acting Press Secretary Silvestre Afable denied allegations that the President recalled her order due to threats by militant labor groups. The Kilusang Mayo Uno had called on workers to defy the Palace order and to join rallies on May 1.Afable admitted that the President was swayed because the appeal came from moderate trade unions. "The President says she respects them as partners in development, and they have proven their sincerity in making governance successful," he said.

"The President's decision was not in response to any threat from segments of the labor sector," Afable said.

"She recognized the fact that Labor Day is a very sacrosanct day for working people," he said.

Alex Aguilar, executive director of the Trade Union Congress of the Philippines, said the President did not debunk their arguments against moving the Labor Day holiday from May 1 to April 29.

Besides the TUCP, the National Confederation of Labor, Alliance of Progressive Labor, Free Farmers Union, Trade Unions of the Philippines and Allied Services, National Labor Union and Lakas Manggagawa Labor Center attended the meeting in Malacañang.

Sensitive

"We're happy that she was sensitive to the request of the responsible side of the labor movement," Aguilar said after the half-hour meeting.

In a resolution, the TUCP said it was important to celebrate Labor Day on May 1 because the day symbolized the "age-old struggle of the working people."

It pointed out that this year also marked the centennial celebration of Labor Day worldwide. The TUCP also reminded the President that most collective bargaining agreements provide that May 1 is a holiday.

The first Labor Day was celebrated in 1882 in the United Sates by the Knights of Labor, an organization that addressed below-standard labor conditions. In its campaign for an eight-hour working day, it staged a strike in Chicago in 1886. The strike turned violent when unknown persons hurled a bomb that killed several policemen.

The group collapsed after it was blamed for the bombing, but its pioneering work led to the celebration of Labor Day.

In the Philippines, Labor Day was first celebrated in 1903 by the Union Obrero Democratico led by Isabelo de los Reyes.

Nationwide strike

Despite Ms Macapagal's retraction of her order, the KMU is pushing through with nationwide rallies dubbed "Kalampagin ng Protesta si Gloria."

"Ms Macapagal recalled her decision as an act of kindness for capitalists, not as a sign of respect for workers. It does not mean that she has suddenly turned pro-worker," KMU secretary general Elmer Labog said.

"Labor Day will always symbolize the revolutionary role of workers in social change that was first ignited by the Eight-Hour movement in Hay Market Square Chicago 116 years ago," Labog said in a statement.

In Malacañang, one of the labor leaders who went to see the President suffered a heart attack.

Felicisimo Carillo, chair of the National Confederation of Labor, had the attack a few minutes after he spoke, according to Aguilar.

Carillo was attended to by Malacañang doctors and was to be brought to a hospital.

Agriculture Secretary Leonardo Montemayor, who was present, said Carillo's heart attack was not prompted by the meeting. "It was a very civil (meeting). The vibes is good," he said.

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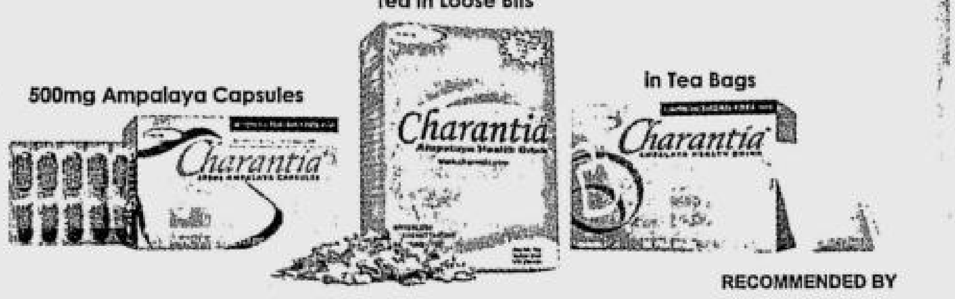

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'If US forces . . .

From page A1

part of the US war against terrorism.

He said the CPP was working on the premise that US troops were not here just to hold joint military exercises with Filipinos and fight Abu Sayyaf bandits holding an American couple but to intervene in the government's fight against the communist insurgency.

'Distorted'

Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal, CPP spokesperson, had earlier described the INQUIRER report on Liwanag's order as "distorted and false." The CPP spokesperson called up the INQUIRER on Sunday to correct the news report.

Rosal made it clear that the Ang Bayan issue was a special edition for the NPA's 33rd founding anniversary. "That was part of comrade Armando Liwanag's message to the communist movement and allies on March 29," he said.

Rosal pointed out that the part of the statement quoted from Ang Bayan "if interpreted wholly was not a direct order to attack."

"What comrade Armando Liwanag has ordered the NPA is to prepare and get ready should the US troops attack the revolutionary movement. Meaning, if the American forces don't attack us, we will not stage any offensive action against them," he explained.

"But if the US soldiers attack the revolutionary forces, we are ready to meet them," he said.

Growing

The ranks of the NPA, a 33-year-old Maoist guerrilla group, have been growing since the 1997 Asian currency crisis took a toll on the local economy.

As of December 2001, the military estimated the communist rebel strength at 11,930 guerrillas with 7,156 firearms.

Peace negotiations with the NPA's political leadership were suspended last June following the NPA assassination of two members of Congress.

Last year, at least 189 NPA guerrillas and 120 government troops were killed in clashes, according to military records. The casualties resulted from 280 military-initiated battles and 67 communist-staged ambushes.

Go home

Instead of fomenting rebellion from Utrecht, The Netherlands, Sison should return to the country and help in the peace process, said Senate President Franklin Drilon.

"(Sison) should come back to the country so that he could see and feel for himself how tired our people are of all the violence wrought by the Abu Sayyaf," Drilon said in a press conference.

Drilon said Sison could "very well see for himself that the presence of US troops is only meant to train our own forces."

If he honors an invitation from House Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr., Sison may yet visit the country.

De Venecia is inviting Sison to join the political summit called by pro-administration legislators.

De Venecia wants Sison to join the final presummit meeting of the All-Parties Conference on May 3-5 at the Manila Hotel, according to a statement issued yesterday by the Speaker's spokesperson Noel Albano.

Sen. Rodolfo G. Biazon said "the communism that Sison continues to espouse as the answer to the political and economic problems of the country has been proven to be a failed concept."

"No less than the collapse of this ideology in its birthplace, the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, provides proof that what Sison is espousing is going nowhere," Biazon said. ***With a report from Rocky Nazareno and AFP***

Boys of summer grit, bear it

From page A1

maleness.

According to Dr. Ronaldo Veneracion, a urologist at the Jose Reyes Memorial Hospital, the chances of a man having penile cancer or cancer of the penis are reduced if he undergoes circumcision.

Dr. Pacita Airoso-Tan, a pediatrician at the United Doctors Medical Center, thinks otherwise.

According to Tan, circumcision of newly born baby boys became a routine because of the belief that uncircumcised men are more prone to penile cancer.

"It has long been proven that this belief is false. Which is why circumcision on a new born is only done if the opening for urine is too small so that they won't be prone to urinary tract infection (UTI)," she said.

Tan also observed that peer pressure is the more frequent cause for boys to undergo circumcision. "They don't want to be teased as 'supot.'

Often the cultural factor has a stronger pull—what we have grown up with—rather than health reasons," Tan added.

The connection between the dirt that accumulates in the male organ and penile cancer is not clear. But according to Dr. Ronaldo Veneracion, many medical journals have published findings that cancer of the penis occurs more frequently in uncircumcised men.

It is possible, he says, that not fully cleaning the male organ has something to do with this type of cancer. In fact, a 17-year-old patient was confined at the Jose R. Reyes Memorial Hospital for cancer of the penis. Yes, the teener was uncircumcised.

"We could not do anything but amputate the organ because the cancer had spread through the whole shaft of the penis," Veneracion said.

But a little boy scheduled for his rite of passage this summer isn't thinking of a disease that could hit him when he grows up to a be full-grown man. He's thinking about the gang, about the fun they'll have talking and snickering about it and feeling like a big, brave man.

Drug users switching to 'pot,' says narc chief

By TJ Burgonio

MORE and more drug abusers are switching to marijuana after shabu (methamphetamine hydrochloride) has become scarce.

Police Director Efren Fernandez, chief of the Narcotics Group, said this was because continuing police operations have choked off the supply of shabu and driven prices to new highs.

Fernandez made the revelation yesterday at a press conference at which he announced the seizure of P.9-million worth of marijuana bricks from the home of a suspected drug dealer in La Trinidad, Benguet.

"We have received reports there is a scarcity of shabu in the market as a result of the operations conducted by the PNP, and abusers are now switching to marijuana," Fernandez told reporters.

He said the downturn in the shabu supply in major cities the past few months has raised prices per gram from P1,500 to 2,800 in Metro Manila and from P3,000 to P5,000 in Cebu.

"This is an indication of its scarcity," Fernandez said.

Shabu has been the No. 1 drug of choice in the country for several years now.

Because of the shift to marijuana, Fernandez said the NarcGroup will intensify its operations against planters and dealers.

There are 98 pot farms in the country, he added, with most of them located in the Cordillera Autonomous Region and Davao province.

"If today we are uprooting plants two to four times a year, let's make it 20 times. We should not wait for the seedlings to grow," Fernandez said.

Fernandez announced the discovery of 46.2 kilos of marijuana bricks, valued at P924,000, during a raid on the home of Ronald Golez in La Trinidad on April 11.

Golez and his alleged accomplice, identified only as Nitoy, were able to escape before the raid. Florenda Laoayan, 19, who was at Golez's house during the raid, was invited for questioning.

DOH to probe dumping of toxic chemicals

THE HEALTH department has called for an investigation into reports that 13 drums of toxic chemicals had been thrown late last month into an already closed dumpsite in Sapang Palay, Barangay Citrus, Bulacan.

In a press briefing where he made a full accounting of the incident, Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit said there should be a deeper investigation into the incident, which resulted in the hospitalization of 52 scavengers.

"We will pursue the investigation... there should be charges filed against those responsible for this," Dayrit said.

The department's National Epidemiology Center reported that on March 25, "a truck driver of Rota Industries dumped 51 metal and cardboard container drums containing various powdered chemicals" in San Jose del Monte, Bulacan.

Thirteen of the drums landed in Barangay Citrus where scavengers got to them and opened them, exposing themselves to the toxic chemicals.

The rest of the cargo of drums were reportedly abandoned near a public cemetery.

Dayrit said the 13 drums came from the Universal Textile Mills and were said to contain "toxic dye."

The scavengers who were rushed to hospital complained of "headaches, yellowish discoloration of hands and feet, cyanosis, vomiting and nausea."

Dayrit explained that the symptoms would indicate chemical poisoning, a condition known as "acute methemoglobinemia" in which oxygen is blocked from reaching the red blood cells.

Although no deaths were reported and those in hospital have already been released, Dayrit said authorities have to ensure that the chemicals would not pose a danger to humans.

Health and San Jose del Monte local officials have agreed that the areas where the chemicals be cordoned off and covered with soil. They said that a 1993 closure order of the dumpsite should be strictly enforced. ***Armand Nocum***

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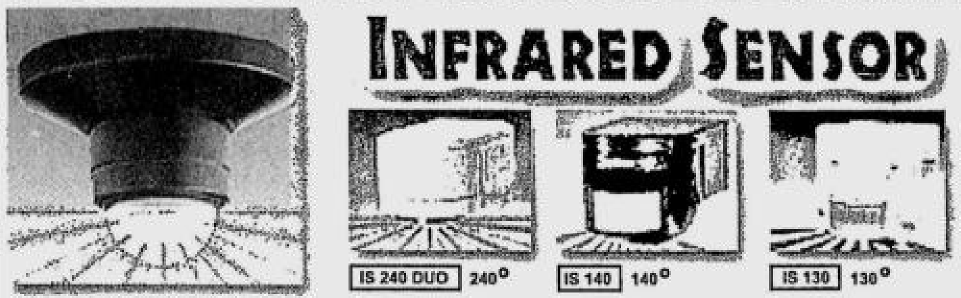

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GOOD NEWS FROM

DEPARTMENT OF TRADE & INDUSTRY PHILIPPINES

CONSUMER & OIL PRICE WATCH

NATIONAL PRICE COORDINATING COUNCIL

We are pleased to inform the consuming public that despite the increase in oil prices, prices of prime commodities have remained stable the past eight months (September 2001 - April 2002). This survey is based on the DTI's price monitoring activities in Metro Manila conducted in coordination with the Department of Agriculture, the Consumer & Oil Price Watch and members of the National Price Coordinating Council, week ending April 14th, covering 35 markets and 10 supermarkets.

COMMODITIES	SEPTEMBER 2001 PRICES	PRICES WEEK ENDING 14 APRIL 2002	INCREASE/ DECREASE SEPT-APRIL
Ordinary Rice (35%) broken	P 18.00	P 19.70	increase
Evap Milk (Alaska & Carnation)	22.00	21.60	decrease
Powdered Milk 180G (Bear Brand)	29.70	28.75	decrease
Coffee Refill 50g (Blend 45, Cafe Puro, Great Taste, Nescafé)	23.00-24.00	20.70-23.50	decrease
Sardines 155g (Master & 555)	8.00	8.15	increase
Detergent Bar (Ajax, Mr. Clean, Surf)	14.50-16.00	15.30-16.75	increase
Pork Liempo	115.00	120.00	increase
Dressed Chicken (Magnolia)	90.00	81.40	decrease
Refined Sugar (kg) (Luisita & Victoria)	28.00	26.55	decrease
Brown Sugar (kg)	24.00	22.40	decrease
Cooking Oil			
Lapad/Bilog	10.00	9.70	decrease
Long Neck	20.00	20.20	increase

This validates the assurance given, in a meeting with the National Price Coordinating Council held last April 10th, that manufacturers of basic goods, retailers and supermarkets will not increase prices in April.

MANUEL A. ROXAS II
Secretary, Department of Trade & Industry
Chairman, National Price Coordinating Council (NPCC)

RAUL T. CONCEPCION
Chairman
Consumer & Oil Price Watch

For comments or inquiries, call DTI Hotline: 890-4932; 896-5740
or visit the DTI website: www.dti.gov.ph/btrcp
or call Consumer & Oil Price Watch nos.: 844-8785, 812-6751 to 62; Fax: 818-6203
Email address: rtc@CII.mozcom.com

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Eugenia D. Apostol
Founding Chairman

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Jobless graduates

EDITORIAL

BEFORE THE MONTH ends, about 384,000 students will have graduated from the country's colleges and universities. What are the prospects of their landing jobs and becoming productive members of society?

As of now, their employment prospects don't look so good. President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo said last Friday that the prospect of this year's graduates getting jobs is not so bright. She said that the present unemployment rate of 10.3 percent is still high. The new graduates, being the most recent additions to the labor force, will have a low priority in the lists of employers who will want to hire people with some experience. Only the best and the brightest of the new graduates may get jobs.

What should give the new graduates some hope is the forecast of the Asian Development Bank that the economy is likely to grow by 4 percent this year, up from last year's 3.4 percent. It is hoped that the higher growth rate will mean the opening of new industries and businesses that will employ some of the new graduates. Also a ray of hope on the horizon is the report that "hot money" is coming in, which could boost confidence in the business community.

Already there are stirrings of discontent among the new graduates. Last Wednesday new graduates of information technology schools who were jobless stormed the business center in Makati and staged a protest in front of the Enterprise II building where the Microsoft office is located. The protesters said they wanted to dramatize the plight of the jobless graduates and to appeal to the business community for employment.

The taking of IT courses has become something of an education fad today, much like the taking of a nursing course about two or three decades ago, when Filipino nurses were in great demand abroad. To their disappointment, many of the new IT graduates have found that a degree is not a passport to employment. For one thing, the capacity of the Philippine business community to absorb IT graduates is limited. For another, developments in computer technology are so fast that things that the students learned in their junior and senior years may now be obsolete and useless.

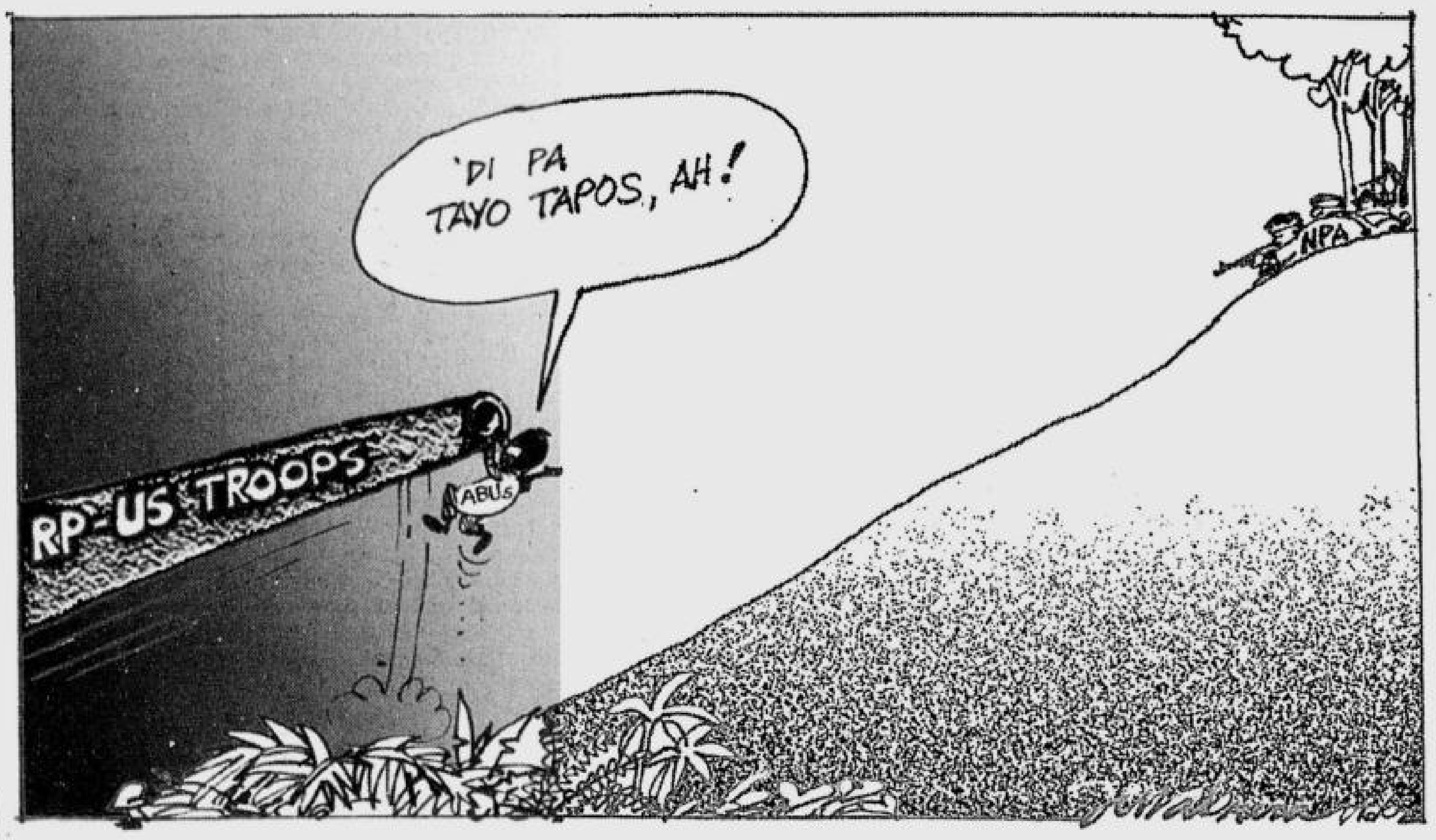
But it is good that some young professionals are finding time to teach less privileged youths how to look for jobs. One such group is called the Professionals Actively Responding Today (PART). The human resources experts of PART recently gave a series of training courses on job application to graduating students of state colleges. It is well that they are helping public school graduates because the latter do not enjoy the competitive advantage that private school graduates have in the search for jobs.

Meanwhile, what should be done in anticipation of the addition of nearly 400,000 new graduates to the labor force next year? The President said the government still needs to create jobs for 2.4 million people until 2004. Whatever happened to her promise to create one million jobs this year?

The problem of unemployment among college graduates could be relieved if only more students could be encouraged to take science, engineering and technical courses. Right now, the popular courses are business administration and education. Of course, we need managers and teachers. But a developing country like the Philippines needs more scientists, engineers and technicians to accelerate its economic development program.

The curriculum of the educational system will have to be overhauled to upgrade the teaching of mathematics and science from the elementary to the college level. More incentives will have to be offered to encourage the youth to take science and engineering courses. More scholarship grants in science courses will have to be given to promising students by the government and the private sector.

A better correspondence will have to be found between the courses offered in the college curriculum and the needs of the economy. It will not do for the educational system to be turning out thousands of graduates who will not be able to find jobs after they graduate. Many of them will be forced to accept jobs for which they are overqualified. Many will also apply to become overseas contract workers. And many will be unemployed, unproductive and will become liabilities to society. A more rational educational, training and employment program will have to be devised to correct the present system.



Make Joey Lina implement Lina Law completely

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

THE LONG-overdue completion of Congressional Avenue Extension in Quezon City has finally started (thanks to Rep. Chuck Mathay who assigned P8 million of his pork barrel to the P250-million project, but no thanks to other congressmen and senators who live in subdivisions that would be directly benefited by the completion of the avenue but have not contributed anything to its completion). But as soon as a lane of the street is paved, squatters erect their shanties on the concrete. Other squatters are erecting stores in the middle of the right-of-way, beside the already finished stretch between Tierra Pura and Mira-Nila Homes.

Why are they doing this when they will inevitably be evicted when the concreting reaches their shanties? Because of that stupid Lina Law. The law mandates that squatters to be evicted should be relocated and paid what is called "disturbance pay." So opportunistic, professional squatters erect their shanties on the right-of-way of government infrastructure projects. When they hear that construction of a street is about to begin, they rush there with their shanties. When work on Congressional Avenue started, there was suddenly an influx of new squatters. They expect to be relocated and paid "disturbance fees."

Remember this: These squatters are violating the law, but they are going to be paid and given new lots and houses by the government for violating the law.

Where does the money come from? From law-abiding taxpayers, some of whom are dutifully paying real estate taxes on the lots being illegally occupied by the squatters. Local governments periodically raise these realty taxes and even impose penalties in the form of fines and interest if the owners fail to pay on time. Yet these same local governments do not prevent squatters from invading private property or help their owners eject the squatters. On the contrary, local officials (mayors, councilors, barangay captains and *kagawads*) coddle the squatters and even encourage them to settle in their territories because they mean votes.

All because of that stupid Lina Law. It was ballyhooed by its sponsors, principally Sen. Joey Lina for whom it was named, as the ultimate solution to the squatting problem. But it made squatting much worse. Squatting is more widespread now, and the squatters are bolder because of another stupid legislation (the one decriminalizing squatting) than before the Lina Law was passed. Because the law gives incentives to squatters.

Where else can you find a law that rewards those who violate it by paying them a "disturbance fee" and giving them cheap houses and lots. These they can sell, and then they go back to squatting, whereupon they will again be given houses and lots under different names. Where can you find a better deal than that? Only in the Philippines.

Remember, most of these squatters are not the deserving poor but professional squatters, members of syndicates. These syndicates have complete organizations, with lawyers and enforcers composed of rogue policemen and soldiers.

The Lina Law has a provision against professional squatters and squatting syndicates, but it is not being enforced. Have you heard of a syndicate member who has been arrested or prosecuted? Yet every squatter colony has one or more such syndicate and the residents know who their officers are.

The law also provides that squatters who are in the way of government infrastructure projects (such as roads) can be ejected summarily. The Lina Law also provides that a census be taken of squatters and that squatters who are not in that census after the deadline are not entitled to relocation. That deadline passed years ago. Yet the Department of Public Works and Highways does not implement those provisions. It still tiptoes around squatters, thus delaying many government projects and increasing their costs because of the additional cost of paying and relocating the squatters.

Remember how the C-5 portion at Libis in Quezon City could not be continued because of some squatters whom the DPWH did not have the political will to eject? Benpres cannot start the C-5 contract awarded to it years ago (the continuation of Katipunan Avenue, crossing Commonwealth Avenue and going to Republic Avenue in Bulacan) because the government cannot eject the squatters living in the road right-of-way. The government will go bankrupt paying hundreds of thousands squatters and relocating them. The squatters have found a gold mine in the Lina Law.

This law should be repealed or at least amended to remove its onerous provisions. But who is the legislator who will move for its repeal or amendment? Every legislator knows this has to be done or else the whole country will be overrun by squatters, but not one of them is brave enough to do it. Because squatters can vote them out of office.

We will never be able to solve the squatting problem unless the politicians stop coddling squatters. But politicians will always play up to those who can give them votes.

But if we are to read the Constitution and the Election Code on domicile more closely, voters can vote only in their permanent addresses and not in the areas where they are squatting. They will not be disfranchised, but they have to vote where they live permanently.

The first line of defense against squatting is the local government units. They are now under the supervision of Interior Secretary Joey Lina, principal sponsor of the hated Lina Law. He should be telling local officials to implement his pet law if it is any good at all. But he has not done that. In fact, when he was governor of Laguna, he did not implement it in his province. He was unable to solve squatting in Laguna. And he refused to allow Laguna to be a relocation site for squatters for whom he professes great love.

Lina has been a failure as interior secretary. He should be removed from there. Instead the President should appoint him anti-squatting czar. Let him implement the Lina Law—if he can.

Changes

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

I SPOKE at a forum recently, and talk eventually got around to corruption. Someone from the audience wondered if we could find enough people in this country who were reasonably honest and who would end, or at least curb, corruption in government if we helped them get to power.

I said half-jokingly that the task seemed almost like the one God assigned to Lot, which was finding 10 just men in Sodom and Gomorrah. They laughed, but said I was evading the question. I said, yes, that was true in part. But not entirely.

I said we might be asking the wrong question in looking for honest people to bring to power to fight corruption. I said the right question might be how to keep them honest after we bring them to power so that they might fight corruption. I said there was a slight difference between Lot's lot, or task, and ours. Which was that after Lot picked out the 10 just men, they remained just. Not so for us: As soon as we put honest men in government, they tend not to remain so.

I said I remembered again the letter to the editor, written by Franklin Sionil Jose, our national artist for literature, where he said he had just discouraged a very promising young man from aspiring to become president. Indeed, he had discouraged the fellow from joining politics. Being a politician, he told the youth, was a recipe for making compromises. Winning a position would give him political capital but deprive him of his integrity. Better, he told the youth, to just keep out of it, to speak his own truth and uphold high moral standards.

I said that while I myself was not prepared to go so far as to stop the best and brightest from trying to realize their best and brightness in politics, I would urge people to give Jose's advice a second thought. It has a glimmer of truth. I said I myself was inclined to advise people to look far more closely not at the promising faces in the horizon but at the horizon itself. Or less metaphorically, to look more closely not at the attributes of individuals but at the process by which we put them in power. That did not mean that I did not believe in individual talent, or moral fortitude. That only meant that I believed processes had a way of changing individuals as much as individuals processes.

I said the elections themselves seemed almost a guarantee the winner would not spend his time scuttling corruption. I understood that during the elections last year, some candidates for congressmen in Metro Manila spent as much as P100 million in their campaign. Some, like Mark Jimenez, did so largely out of their own pockets, Jimenez in particular investing in it to fight off extradition. Others did so with contributions from "friends." Erap himself, when he won in 1998, enjoyed bountiful help from friends, all of whom wanted to bet on a sure thing. Chief among them was Lucio Tan who recovered his investment in the blink of an eye.

You win in those circumstances, how can you possibly end, or curb, corruption in government? Maybe you'll end the *masasayang araw* or good times of the people who did not support you, but not so the "friends" who did. People who owe political debts are constrained to pay them as much as countries who owe monetary ones. The creditors are unyielding and exact equally usurious interest rates. You thrust an honest man into power by these means, is he likely to remain honest for very long? There are limits to moral fortitude, particularly when they run against traditional values like *utang na loob*, or more modern ones like plain *utang*.

I said before in a column that it was enough to make you wonder why we discriminated against "nuisance candidates." Such candidates are defined as people who have very little chance of winning, if only because they have no money to run a campaign. That leaves us with non-nuisance candidates who have a fortune, or who have friends who have a fortune, to spend to win elections. Who is bound to be the bigger nuisance afterwards?

I do not know what the answer to all this is. Some people have suggested that we adopt a parliamentary system to stop the cost of elections from spiraling. It is something worth arguing about.

I do know the answer to it is not to scrap elections altogether. You'd be surprised at some of the things you hear at forums: the authoritarian option has a way of constantly being entertained when a democratic practice falls short of expectations. And I do know the answer to it is not to scrap the "one person, one vote" rule and limit the vote only to those who can read and write. I've heard this proposed several times over the past year as a solution to the Erap phenomenon. It is not only patently undemocratic, it is also thoroughly misguided, assuming as it does that the "educated classes" are beyond being bought or duped.

I do know enough to be thoroughly cynical when people say they won't mind making a pact with the devil to build heaven on earth. Or less metaphorically, who say they will make the necessary compromises to win so that they can carry out their progressive agenda afterwards. How you win is what you do afterward. The means dictate the ends. You make a pact with the devil, you will build only hell on earth. I've seen it happen too many times not to trust in the power of this truth. Not least in friends of mine, who were the epitome of honesty and integrity and idealism, who ran under Erap's banner, saying they just needed to win so that they could do well by the nation. They never did well by the nation, they just did ill to themselves. They ruined in two years a reputation for honesty and integrity and idealism which took a lifetime to build.

People do make a difference. But differences do make, and unmake, people just as well.

JDV's 'tampo'

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

SPEAKER Jose de Venecia called up early last Sunday morning from San Francisco before taking the flight back to Manila, after attending the Inter-Parliamentary Union conference in Morocco and conferring with his counterparts in Italy and Athens. He was quite disturbed over the news reports last week attributed to Commissioner Victoria Avena saying that the Presidential Commission on Good Government would look once more into the case of Landoil Corp. that he founded in the 1970s and headed until 1985. De Venecia pointed out that the Supreme Court in 1994 had upheld "with finality" the Sandiganbayan ruling clearing him in the Landoil case. He also stressed that his case had been probed by three different PCGG administrations, one of them chaired by Adolf Azcuna, the law partner of current Chair Haydee Yorac. What came out from these investigations was that he and other Landoil officials were the victims of Marcos, not his cronies.

* * *

De Venecia also stressed that since he resigned from Landoil in 1985, he was not a signatory to the agreement Landoil forged with the PCGG, which stipulated the terms and conditions for resolving the Philippine government's compensation claims from the now defunct company. He said the loans contracted by Landoil during his time were part of the "normal course of business" for the company, the pioneering exporter of Filipino manpower that unfortunately got mired in the Middle East because of the Iran-Iraq war in the 1970s. He also emphasized that Landoil's war claims, which have been assigned to the PCGG, remain uncollected because there has been no decision yet by the United Nations agency that hears such claims.

* * *

JDV sounded like he was nursing a *tampo* with his former running mate. A key ally of his, Rep. Roquito Ablan, had opined that the PCGG's move was "politically motivated." While Ablan did not spell it out, the impression in some sectors was that GMA allowed the PCGG to resurrect the Landoil issue in order to temper JDV on charter change, toward which she is said to be quite cool at the moment. De Venecia explained that he has been for a parliamentary/unicameral system as early as 1993, but when then President Ramos backed out of the move for charter change, he decided to lie low. Last year he resurrected it, but when President Macapagal told him it wasn't timely to push for it, JDV said that like a good lieutenant he kept quiet. He stressed that this time he was not initiating it. "The clamor for charter change is coming from various forces," he said.

* * *

De Venecia's *tampo* stems from the fact that, as his allies have stressed, he has been GMA's staunchest defender and has pushed many important bills that will directly benefit this administration, such as devising a vehicle for absorbing the non-performing loans of banks, the securitization of government assets and the creation of a housing department. During his latest trip, JDV said he spoke to the king of Morocco and the speaker of parliament about the need to support the Macapagal administration in the resolution of the conflict with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, especially since Morocco is a major player in the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC), and they pledged support. He said he also sought the support of his counterparts in Italy and Greece. "*Kung hindi ko mahal si* Gloria, *gagawin ko ba ito?*" he asked.

I must admit that the timing of the PCGG's resurrection of the Landoil case lends itself to interesting speculations, but I'm not prepared to declare a connection between the PCGG and the Palace because of the independent-mindedness of the PCGG team. The other side of the coin is justice to De Venecia. If, as he pointed out, the Supreme Court has already ruled with finality on his case, it does not seem fair to pull it out periodically to torment him. Doing so gives rise to speculations of political harassment.

* * *

My niece, Olivia "Ivee" Olivares, daughter of my brother Luis Olivares Jr. and the former Nena Magsaysay Barretto, has teamed up with her "double" cousin Plet Corpus-Bolipata in a painting exhibition at the Drawing Room art gallery on Metropolitan Avenue and the West Gallery in Glorietta 4 in Makati City. Plet is married to muralist Elmer Borlongan and is the daughter of lawyer Ricardo Bolipata and the former Elenita Magsaysay-Corpus of Zambales. Art runs heavy in Plet's family as her brothers are well-known musicians: violinist Coke Bolipata, cellist Chino Bolipata and pianist Jed Bolipata. The Magsaysays, however, are quick to claim the artistic lineage of the younger generation, citing as proof the clan's grande dame, renowned painter Anita Magsaysay-Ho, who opened the Drawing Room exhibit with former NCCA chair Jimmy Laya and noted art collector Jovencio Cuanang.

* * *

Ivee and Plet have very different styles. Ivee concentrates on landscapes drawn mainly from her childhood memories of her mom's native Zambales as well as from England where she has been staying for almost eight years now. Ivee lives in Chichester, West Sussex, UK, with her British husband, lawyer Ian Mellor, and her landscapes reveal her homesickness for her native land.

Plet, on the other hand, appears very fascinated with the human figure, although ironically, her father now recalls, when Plet was about 18 years old, her parents brought her to the Folies Bergere in Paris and she covered her eyes throughout the show.

Ivee who went to the Ateneo studied art London's Chelsea College of Art for four years, and Plet trained at the Art Students League in New York City. Catch their show at the two galleries until April 23.

Rite of passage

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

ONE college student's account of his first day of school was so remarkable I remember it to this day. Seems that he had gone to the United States for the summer break and while there decided to stay until the very last possible moment before he had to return to the country for school opening. But as happens so often, his flight out of LA was delayed, and the plane didn't land in Manila until about an hour before his first class. So he jumped into the family car and was sped to campus, where he managed to make it to his class, albeit 15 minutes late. When the teacher sarcastically asked him if he was also going to use "traffic" as an excuse, he certainly had a humdinger of a story to tell her!

The young man's tale comes to mind upon reading the report in yesterday's issue that the US Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) has tightened its rules on the allowable length of stay of a tourist in the United States. From the usual six months, it has ruled that from now on, a tourist visa is good for only 30 days. The new rules also state that before being allowed entry, the visa holder must "adequately establish the precise nature and purpose of the visit." So, "visiting with family" may no longer do to explain why you flew the thousands of miles from the Philippines to America. Will "to bring my sister her regular supply of choc-nut, dried mangoes, *pastillas* and pirated VCDs of local movies" do?

* * *

NEWS of the new INS restrictions could not have come at a worse time. This happens to be the peak season of travel to the United States, when the prices of airline tickets are at their highest, and it is actually quite a feat to be able to book a seat or seats on short notice.

For members of the Filipino upper and upper-middle class, a trip to the United States is a rite of passage, as it is a dream of a lifetime for the middle and lower classes. Plans are laid during the school year, with the break in classes deemed as an opportune time for the whole family to "take a break" and make the pilgrimage.

For most Filipinos, a trip to the United States is rarely just a sightseeing trip. It is usually a much-awaited chance to visit with family and friends, and nearly everyone has family or friends, or even just friends of friends in the United States, what with nearly three million Filipino-Americans. Rare is the Filipino visitor who has to stay in hotels or apartels, as someone's home or apartment or sofa-bed is always available. Whatever is lost in the acculturation process, the Filipino virtue of hospitality has proven to be extremely durable.

But an American sojourn is also considered the defining mark of a family's "affluence." Being able to travel as a family is a dream nursed and aspired for, and toward which savings are pooled and economies taken.

* * *

WHEN the children reach college age, or as a graduation gift after high school, travelling by themselves to the United States becomes a way of testing their new-found independence and establishing their status as young adults.

Some young people may even extend this lengthening leash by asking to embark on or continue their college studies in the States. New college graduates dream of flying off to New York and finding their first jobs there, coming home only after they tire of the rat race but not before they have had a big bite of the Big Apple, testing their wings and notching up their coolness credentials.

A young writer once remarked that affluent Filipinos of his generation considered New York, or to be exact, Manhattan, their "spiritual home," the city where they were meant to live, their having been born in a Third World backwater a mere accident of fate. What he may not have realized is that New York is but the contemporary equivalent of Madrid and Paris for the *ilustrado* generation and for young upper-class women up to the 1930s and 1940s, and Swiss finishing schools for young misses in the 1950s and 1960s. A stint abroad was a necessity, the "final touch" to the creation of a polished, urbane and socially confident young person.

But with just 30 days on one's visa, how can one's rite of passage turn into a life-altering adventure? It takes a week just to ride the subway with confidence!

* * *

I DON'T know how other Filipinos might view the new INS rules. For me, it would be a disaster. I have a dizzying enough time as it is whenever I fly to the United States, with my family or by myself. Once there, I have to divide my time between two sisters and a brother, three in-laws, as well as friends and cousins on both coasts.

I consider leisure trips abroad chances to take a break from a daily deadline and the pressures of a full calendar. But on my last trip to the States to attend the wedding of a niece, I found that in the month I stayed there, I hadn't been able to get to bed before midnight! There was always a dinner engagement to fulfill, a night out on the town, long car trips to various destinations, and 24-hour Wal-Mart and K-Mart outlets.

With little or no chance to extend my stay, I can imagine how topsy-turvy my itinerary would be, as I try to accommodate everyone demanding that I come pay them a visit!

US authorities may believe 30 days is more than enough time for a typical tourist to gawk at the Grand Canyon, gaze upon the Lincoln Memorial, marvel at Manhattan's skyscrapers, and rubber-neck on the streets of LA. But they haven't reckoned with Pinoy family ties, which are stronger than even the harshest visa restrictions.

Now for the bad news

SENSE AND SENSIBILITY

Bambi L.Harper

THERE is no denying that Ilocos should have been, from the very beginning of any tourism master plan, given a high in priority for development. There is also no denying that much has changed since the 1960s and 1970s when it was a sleepy rather dangerous place with barely any facilities but of great interest to antique collectors and dealers. However, whether for political reasons (are there any others around here?) or lack of interest, Ilocos has been left pretty much on its own. Whatever changes and improvements have taken place has been due to the Ilocano who considers outside suggestions as interference anyway and is likely to shrug them off.

The concept of responsible development, of submitting any plan to outside authority because the town is considered part of the world's heritage is fine on paper, it but does not mean squat when it comes to constructing an unsuitable structure or remodelling a landmark as one sees fit. It's the old conundrum between the rights of private ownership and the people's heritage.

Today Juan de Salcedo certainly wouldn't recognize his old *encomienda*. The Vigan plaza doesn't shut down until the last karaoke singer has gone home for the night, which was 2:00 a.m. for some in our group. You can walk around and try the Vigan *empanada* that probably tastes like no other, complete with *longaniza* and a whole hardboiled egg. There is street dancing and an outdoor café, shops that sell new-old furniture, a market where you can find Ilocano woven fabrics for P30 a yard, not to mention the famous *bagnet*.

The ecclesiastical museum located at the archbishop's palace, itself an architectural gem, is now open to the public. On the ground floor built in 1783 is located the Repositorio Hall and the Exhibit Gallery. On display as the centerpiece is the sterling silver "Repositorio por Jueves Santo" of the Cathedral. The statue of San Ladislao is an original Isabelo Tampingco. Much still has to be done with the archives since there is neither an air-conditioner nor humidifier for the preservation of the documents that includes the baptismal entry of Fr. Jose Burgos. Jollibee and Chow King might be interested in their corporate image and do something about that, especially if their profits are derived from the use of the historic plaza.

Twenty-seven whole pieces of granite (*piedra China*) make up the stairs leading to the upper floor where the Throne Room of the archbishop is located. Most ornaments here date to 1756. The ivory crucifix that greets you as you enter is quite beautiful (cf. the one at Sto. Tomas that is probably older and more "Chinese looking") as well as the statue of Ntra. Sra. De la Caridad (Apo Caridad), Queen of Ilocandia.

You will also find in the rectory of the cathedral a room set aside for some of the artefacts of the church. The bust of the Sacred Heart must be one of the most gorgeous and awe-inspiring in the country. At the moment, there is a 40-frame photo exhibit on Vigan taken by a German pharmacist, Dr. Alexander Schadenberg, who lived there in the 1880s. The Dresden Museum in Germany where most of his other photographs of Northern Luzon are stored provided the archdiocese with the negatives.

For those who are inclined to the beach, I regret to say that Poro Pinggit is still undeveloped although it has a gorgeous coastline and lovely sand dunes. However, San Ildefonso and other places are there, but whether they have decent toilets and changing rooms, I haven't heard and I doubt it. For reasons that aren't clear, the government doesn't appear to believe that these facilities are necessary. I presume government officials believe the bushes will do.

There is no hotel on a par with Fort Ilocandia in Ilocos Sur since no area on a beach outside Vigan has been designated as an investment priority with the corresponding incentives to outsiders. My own preference is to use Laoag as a base and drive down to Vigan for the day, stopping by the different towns such as Sinait and Badoc on the way. We drove to Batac, the Marcos mausoleum being *de rigueur* for the visitor. I was requested to remove my hat (the Ilocano summer sun is fierce) as we trooped passed the Apo's bier. The place was jumping with tourists, and to all intents and purposes, it is a shrine to the late president. The grounds have deteriorated in the last few years and the souvenir shop with cheapy products set up by the household help does nothing to enhance the site. The help must be too busy hawking their wares to sweep the grounds, dispose of the garbage and water the plants. Some discipline is in order here.

But the worst part of the tourism development is the lack of reliable, clean bathrooms. One resort that opened two years ago still provides no restrooms for its diners even if it charges a P50 entrance fee. The bathroom both for men and women belongs to the staff and had a waiting line a mile long. Soft-drinks are presented without paper napkins so you end up with wet table tops. With a bill over a thousand, no official receipt was given (the excuse was that they had run out of them).

The only solution I can see is to open up the resort industry to 100-percent foreign ownership. The foreign investors will hopefully abide by the rules of the country since the Filipino will not.

The restrooms in bus depots were even in a worse stage of decrepitude and filth. We stopped in an ill-lighted one where the door to the ladies had rotted off and had not been replaced, and its floor was of cement and wet. The stench being what it was, the men went off and peed against an outside wall. For women travellers my suggestion is wear a skirt and use the open fields. It's cleaner and more sanitary.

This is not to say that Ilocos is the front runner in a contest for "The disastrous state of public toilets" (those in the Bacolod and Iloilo airports are not far behind in stench). So my unsolicited advice to the tourism secretary before he goes flying off to places with reliable restrooms is: Do something about the local ones if you wish to promote tourism.

A love-hate relationship

YOUNGBLOOD

Angeli Angeles Alagcan

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—**Ed.**

I HAVE a love-hate relationship with America. Even as a child, I loved everything about the United States—from Hollywood movies, Hershey's to Barbie dolls and even New York. Yes, especially New York. I've had a thing for those brown-stone apartments in the Big Apple ever since I saw "Breakfast at Tiffany's." I have developed an attachment to everything about New York. My greatest dream is to live there. Period.

Yes, I am a fanatic. But my fondness for New York may be an effect of my long struggle to escape the life I have been living for so long. Having been born in the protective enclave of my parents, my life has been close to being perfect. But that's just it: I don't want perfection. Everything I ever did has been routine and standard. I want excitement. I want to venture into a different culture, a different life.

This was one of the reasons I chose to study in the University of the Philippines. In this university, you have all your options lined up in front of you. All you have to do is choose. You can do whatever you want with your life.

Even as I study in UP, I gear all my actions so that they will bring me closer to New York. America, is my ultimate destination. It is where I see success and personal fulfillment.

But how I hate myself for this! I am finally giving myself a liberal education. I am surveying the different issues and forming opinions about them. I know how it is to deal with a society like ours. And yet, after exposing myself to poverty, corruption and other ills of society, I can think of nothing else but my American dream.

I just talked to my Mom and we argued nonstop over the ongoing Balikatan military exercises. She approves of the Balikatan and reasons that it is the lesser evil, considering that corruption is intrinsic in the military and the government. That's the way it is, she said.

I was outraged by what she said. I gave her a pep talk on the possible consequences of having American soldiers on Philippine soil. I reminded her that Americans never give anything for free, that there is always a price to pay.

She just laughed at me. I was annoyed, and I was about to give her another litany of reasons for asking America to go away. But then she pointed out what I have been denying for so long. You want to be an American, she said.

And that hit me—and hit me hard. I never said I wanted to be an American, I told her.

But you want to live in New York, she pointed out.

Ok, I admit that. But I never really considered that to be the same thing. I have always considered myself idealistic—a nationalist. In UP, I have opposed everything brought by the West. Colonial mentality is a disease, I have always said.

But was I just lying through my teeth? Have I been a part of the bandwagon all along—just another hopeful Filipino wanting a different life abroad?

It is a shame to even consider it. What I profess to believe in may be totally different from what I really feel. I may not admit it, but the clothes I wear, the food I eat, the movies I watch, even the language I speak—they all reveal the truth. I know what the right thing to do is, but if brought to the right place, will I do what is right? I speak as if I know what's best for my country, but I plan to leave this place and live in New York. I will soon eat my own words because there is so little I can do for the country I'm so bent on defending.

It is confusing for me now. Do I lose my idealism if I plan to keep my dreams? There is a tug-of-war going on in my mind between what is ideal and what is practical. I wonder which one will win. But I sincerely feel, though I may not admit it, that I will always love New York.

Angeli Angeles Alagcan, 19, is an incoming journalism senior at the University of the Philippines in Diliman.

Soul mates

Lyn E. Chavez

THE YEAR was 1985; Manila was in the middle of a long, hot summer. It was the first day of enrolment in high school. I was standing in line to pay my tuition fee at the registrar's office when I heard somebody step up behind me. I turned around, and there was this boy, tall, golden-skinned and brown-haired. I felt as if the Big Bang theory was happening inside my chest, my stomach. All the things one was supposed to feel at the onset of a mad, first love, I felt—the tingle, the butterflies, the stars all around my head.

His name was JJ. All through high school, I adored him from a distance, never mustering the courage to approach him. First love can be cruel: you scale dizzying heights of ecstasy and plunge into the dark depths of misery.

Fast forward to 1989, another scorching summer. It was already the middle of my first semester in college. I entered the classroom, took my seat and prepared for the class. I looked toward the door just as somebody was entering. Still tall, golden-skinned, brown-haired, a bit more mature. It was he.

I began to wonder if this was a sign. Or just one of life's more cruel tricks, in the guise of coincidence. Was I reading too much into it? Or was I being offered another chance to be with my soul mate, the twin half of my heart?

We became good friends soon after that, having come from the same high school and everything. We went to the library together, had lunch together. He came to me when his girlfriend dumped him. I cried on his shoulder when my boyfriend left for Greece. We had the same course, so we always made sure we synchronized our schedules so we'd always have the same class at the same time. There were times when my heart really broke, other times when it was almost all I could do to stop myself from getting rid of this rigid control I had over my emotions: Don't let him know, don't let him see. Friendship is better than not being with him at all.

Time really heals. After graduation, we parted ways, lived our own separate lives. It's been almost a decade since I last saw him. I heard from some friends that he'd gotten married. I went through a few failed relationships before I finally wised up and snagged the real thing.

Present day, year 2002. I am now a 29-year-old wife to a wonderful man and mother to three adorable children. Some sleepless nights I still think of him, of what might have been if I'd acted on my belief that he was my soul mate. And I look beside me and I see this man, this wonderful, wonderful man who truly saw through me, to the soul within me.

And I realized, I got my soul mate, after all.

Gov't workers can't afford tours

MANY government officials have already spoken in defense of the four-day workweek program. Allow us, the government employees whom they neither consulted nor informed, to state our position.

The government is fooling nobody but itself in thinking that given a shorter workweek, government employees will have more time to spend with their families, go on a vacation or travel and therefore help boost domestic tourism. We have stated time and again that what government workers need is not more days without work but a salary increase and respect for our job security.

It is absurd for the Macapagal administration to expect us to contribute to domestic tourism when our meager salaries are not even enough for our daily needs, and the prices of basic goods and services keep rising. Considering that government employees did not receive any salary increase this year, where will we get the money to spend for things other than our daily needs.

Stretching the number of working hours to supposedly offset a four-day workweek does not automatically translate into better public service. In fact, it's one day less for those who need the services of government agencies. There are public services that are needed on a daily basis like loan applications and releases, licenses and permits processing, etc.

Is the administration experimenting on a smaller government role in public services in keeping with its policy of privatization and streamlining the bureaucracy? We may not have our jobs back after a longer weekend if we will not remain vigilant.

We believe that fewer working days is an indicator of an economic slowdown, contradicting government's claim that the economy is improving. Even the business sector and private workers have already expressed their opposition to it.

Administrative Order No. 32 should be scrapped. It takes away the victory the workers won when they fought for an 8-hour workday. It is like salt being rubbed on the wounds of impoverished government employees.

—FERDINAND GAITE, national president, Confederation for Unity, Recognition and Advancement of Government Employees (Courage), 9-A, K-F St., Kamuning, Quezon City

Free e-pass tags can help ease SLEX traffic

I HAVE been a consistent but fair critic of the South Luzon Expressway and the Skyway system, being a regular user of the facilities. I commend and praise them whenever they deserve it, but I also lambaste them to call their attention to certain issues.

So far this year, since the last toll increase last Jan. 1 and a second increase coming in July, the only improvement I see consists of the fewer instances of traffic congestion on the elevated portion of the Skyway, which is not because of a newly implemented traffic flow program, but because of simple economics. It seems that the regular patrons of the elevated portion of the Skyway have moved down to the at-grade section where traffic now has gone from bad to worse along longer stretches of the SLEX, especially during the morning and afternoon rush. Consequently, the old problem of bottlenecks at the exit points remains, and is now a bigger problem because of the bigger volume of vehicles.

I repeat my call to the Skyway management to give the e-pass tags away free of charge to SLEX users, since this will allow the implementation of the e-pass payment system and help unclog SLEX bottlenecks at the exits. If the Skyway management is worried about cost of the tags, it is our concern too, but I guess it is their job to ease the public's concerns, and not the other way around.

Once the e-pass system is fully in place, there will be a lot of ways to attract motorists back to the elevated portion, decongesting the at-grade portion of the SLEX. And as a ripple effect, a smooth, safe and decongested at-grade SLEX will attract service road users, creating a win-win scenario for all. After all, isn't this the purpose and objective of the Skyway?

The burden of improving the situation at the SLEX is the skyway management's mandate and business. It would be a dream come true for most of us to see that the Skyway system operating in full.

—PAUL B. BAGATSING, 63 Angeles St., Alabang Hills Village, Alabang, Muntinlupa City

No comparison between Ninoy and Erap

THIS refers to the reply of Teresita S. Castillo, chief of staff of Sen. Teresa Aquino-Oreta, regarding the March 7 column of Belinda Olivares-Cunanan on the issue of comparing Joseph Estrada to Ninoy Aquino.

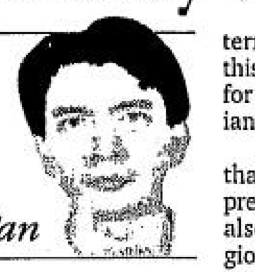
As an ordinary citizen I believe that no one, not even the friends of Erap, can compare the causes that Ninoy stood up for with the cause of Erap. So no one should say that Oreta was simply pointing out the fact that both Erap and Ninoy felt that they could not get justice because of what they discerned to be the mind-set and the lack of impartiality of the courts. How could Oreta even dare to find any grounds for any comparison?

Let me remind the senator and her staff that Ninoy was tried and sentenced to die by the military tribunal. It's a different case with Erap.

—DANTE L. DARUNDAY, c/o Oasis Pawnshop, Quezon Street, Barangay Centro, Masbate City

Holy land, unholy wars

PINOY KASI



Michael Tan

IT is amazing how the Holy Land, the site of many sacred places for Muslims, Jews and Christians, should be so wracked by slaughter and suffering, by so many unholy wars. Unfortunately, the news coverage, often focusing on Palestinian suicide bombers, fails to educate people on the long history of this conflict.

In Catholic schools we are taught about the Bible, with some references to biblical history, but few of us realize that the Old and New Testaments are as much chronicles of Judaism as they are of Christianity. The Old Testament springs alive as we learn of the Jews' struggle for a homeland, and their many passages from captivity to freedom, only to be enslaved by new masters.

In the year 63 BC, the Jewish homeland, Judea, was incorporated into the Roman province of Palestine. The Jews did not end their struggles there, continuing to resist Rome. From 113 to 138 AD there were numerous armed Jewish revolts, culminating with the destruction of Jerusalem and the Jews being sold to slavery. The Jews dispersed to live as minorities in many nations, suffering from persecution and bloody pogroms, especially from anti-Semitic Christians.

Meanwhile, Islam emerged in the 7th century and was rapidly becoming an influential new force. What used to be the Roman province of Palestine was now mainly occupied by Arab Muslims. Islam expanded, and by the 13th century, it had reached as far east as the Philippines, influencing many cultures not just in terms of religion but also in language, philosophy, science and the arts. This Islamic Golden Age was to decline with time, and in the 20th century, was to collapse with the onslaught of Western colonialism.

In the late 19th century, weary of their diaspora and the anti-Semitism of Christians, Jews established a Zionist movement with the goal of establishing their own nation-state. The Jews were powerful enough, economically and politically, to lobby for a homeland.

Jews began to move back into Palestine. In 1913, Jews comprised 5 percent of the population of Palestine; by 1922, they constituted 11 percent of the population. All this was happening as Western powers, mainly the British, were taking over the region. A British mandate over Palestine was declared on Sept. 11, 1922, with promises of a homeland, within Palestine, for Jews.

The tensions began to build up. There were attempts at dialogue, but Jews and Palestinians had little trust in each other. After World War II and Hitler's Holocaust, the number of Jewish refugees swelled, many migrating to Palestine. On May 14, 1948, with the United Nations' approval, the state of Israel was proclaimed. Palestine, as an independent nation, never materialized. (Yasser Arafat only heads a Palestinian Authority, not a country.)

Over the last 50 years, the clashes have continued, with many Israelis convinced that the Arabs want to exterminate them. Several full-blown wars with Palestinians and other Arab neighbors resulted in Israelis occupying more territory, so that today, two-thirds of the Palestinian population are refugees, many living in camps. Palestine has in effect become a pressure cooker, producing the many infitada (uprisings) and suicide bombers.

The Palestinian cause has been expropriated by an assortment of groups, from radical Muslim fundamentalists to our own Abu Sayyaf bandits. In one videotape following the conflagration in New York City, Osama bin Laden referred to more than 80 years of Muslim suffering, which he said he hoped Americans could now experience. This was probably a reference to the events of the 1920s when Western powers occupied much of the Middle East.

Unfortunately, this identification of the Palestinian issue with Muslim religious radicalism and terrorism obscures the roots of this conflict, which is a struggle for a homeland for both Palestinians and Israelis.

Many people are unaware that while the Palestinians are predominantly Muslim, there are also Jews and Christians, religious and secular. The Palestinian suicide bombers, for example, now come mainly from the Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigade, which is a secular group. (Note that the brigade has deployed women suicide bombers, which runs counter to Muslim fundamentalist beliefs that women cannot become martyrs.)

Hanan Mikhail Ashrawi, formerly a spokesperson for Yasser Arafat's government, is a Christian. One of the most articulate and compassionate politicians I have ever heard, Ashrawi has spoken out repeatedly against terrorism, and decries how the terrorists have "hijacked" the Palestinian cause.

The conflict has escalated because politicians on both sides have capitalized on the animosities people harbor for "the other side." Yasser Arafat has refused to rein in the suicide bombers and in January declared, in a speech, that "one million martyrs are on their way to Jerusalem." Israel's Prime Minister Ariel Sharon has borrowed US President George Bush's rhetoric about war on terrorism to try to justify ferocious attacks on Palestinian territories, killing hundreds of suspected "terrorists" in the last month.

The next few weeks will be crucial not just for Israel and Palestine but for the world. Developments there affect us in many ways, from hikes in oil prices whenever the conflict escalates, to our own Muslim secessionists claiming Palestine as one of their causes. As we sit and watch, we would do well to remember how pernicious the effects of religious intolerance can be, how it can simmer for centuries and boil over when politicians capitalize on hatred.

* * *

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Divers plunge into probe of ferry fire

By Philip C. Tubeza

DIVERS have been brought in to help with the investigation of the fire that killed at least 32 people on the MV Maria Carmela passenger ferry that sank on Sunday, three days after a fast-moving fire broke out near the end of an overnight trip from Masbate to Lucena City.

The divers also will look for more bodies aboard the stricken vessel, which was carrying at least 324 passengers, 81 of whom were not listed on the passenger manifest.

The death toll rose to 32 yesterday after Coast Guard divers recovered six bodies from the wreck yesterday.

Three of the bodies were found in the pilot room and the other three in the cabin section.

The sinking may hamper efforts to discover the cause of the fire, which was believed to have started on a lower level for vehicles and cargo. The Coast Guard has urged witnesses to come forward.

Many of those who died drowned after failing to grab life vests before they jumped into the sea.

The Coast Guard has denied that the MV Maria Carmela was intentionally sunk.

Lt. Armand Balilo, PCG spokesperson, said that while the ship's sinking would hamper the investigation, the Coast Guard's divers were capable of retrieving "evidence" from the ship, which lies some 45 feet below the sea about one nautical mile from Lucena's Dalahican pier.

Relatives of the missing passengers have accused the vessel's owners, the Montenegro Shipping Co., of "maneuvering" to have the ship sunk to erase any trace of evidence of their negligence.

Balilo explained that the ship sank because its structure, particularly the hull, had been weakened by the four-day fire.

"There's no truth to those accusations. If we wanted to sink it, we would have done it earlier," he said.

"We tried to preserve the ship as much as possible but it just collapsed," he added.

He said Coast Guard divers were also equipped with underwater cameras that can be used to get still photos of possible evidence. Japanese Coast Guard Commander Kiyotaka Noma, a search and rescue expert with the Japanese International Cooperation (Jica) office in the country, is also helping the Coast Guard.

He said frogmen had begun scouring the sunken vessel last Sunday and found "body parts in the bridge."

Investigators are still trying to find out what started the fire in the ship on Thursday morning.

Besides the copra in the cargo section, they are also looking into reports that engine trouble may have started the fire.

Coast Guard chief Vice Admiral Reuben Lista said earlier that his men were also checking reports that somebody may have deliberately started the fire.

"We will look into it. But I don't think that was what happened," Lista said.

A source told the INQUIRER that an initial investigation showed that the ship's officers might have violated safety regulations by placing the ship's cargo of copra near an exhaust pipe in the storage section.

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Cuenco: 'I was quoted out of context'

CUENCO

A LEGISLATOR yesterday said he was taken out of context when an INQUIRER report published Monday (April 15) quoted him as saying that moves to amend the Constitution were meant to benefit Speaker Jose de Venecia.

Rep. Antonio Cuenco, in a two-paragraph statement, said he was quoted out of context and the "headline is misleading" in the story titled "Shift to parliamentary gov't ploy to make De Venecia PM, says solon."

In that report, Cuenco was quoted as saying that De Venecia wanted a parliamentary system of government through direct amendments by Congress "because he can't get himself elected in a presidential form of government."

"What I said was that the better mode of effecting changes in the Constitution was through a Constitutional Convention and not through direct amendments made by Congress which are suspect," said Cuenco in his statement.

"Proposals made by Congress can be branded as self-serving and designed to promote the interests of some politicians," he said.

"It was never my intention to denigrate either the Speaker or any other member of the House on whom I have the highest respect," he added.

Visitors warned on strict ban on leaving wastes on Mt. Pulag

KABAYAN, Benguet—"Biodegradable" may sound environment-friendly but not to protectors of the Mt. Pulag National Park here.

Emerita Tamiray, park superintendent, said they are strictly prohibiting visitors from leaving anything, even biodegradable materials such as leftover food, on Mt. Pulag's summit to protect cloud rats (*Crateromis schaderdergi*) that may be poisoned by materials alien to them.

Tamiray said biodegradable materials (anything that is capable of being broken down by natural processes, such as bacterial action) could kill cloud rats, which have been under the list of endemic wildlife species since Mt. Pulag has been declared as a national protected area system.

Mt. Pulag, at 2,922 meters above sea level, is Luzon's highest mountain and the country's second highest mountain next to Mt. Apo in Davao del Sur.

"If you carry microbes alien to the park, it will wipe out native species. We do not want that to happen. Spitting is not allowed, too," Tamiray told a group of reporters who climbed the mountain last week.

"Biodegradable materials will contaminate the park and can poison the wildlife that can ingest leftover food. Fruits and other spoiled food left in the park can kill some endemic species," she said.

She said that even bringing pets to the park, like cats and dogs, is not allowed because these are potential carriers of diseases that could affect the wildlife, vegetation and the indigenous people in the park's surroundings.

Tamiray said the population of cloud rats in the park has slowly diminished because hunters seek the animals for their fur.

Park officials also prohibit smoking, washing and taking baths in the park's spring waters and building camp fires.

Tamiray said Pulag is also in peril as villagers living near it continue to clear forests by means of *kaingin* (slash-and-burn and farming).

She said the Kalanguya tribal folk living in Barangay Lusod, about 20 km from Pulag's grassland trail, had started farming activities that could destroy the natural beauty of the park.

She, however, said they could not blame the villagers because farming is their only means of livelihood.

Last month's burning of at least 50 of 800 hectares of the mountain's grassland also contributed to the deterioration of the park, she said.

She said they were still determining the source of the fire that affected parts of Pulag.

"The deterioration of the park is slow, but it is possible that the mountain's wildlife will be gone before we even know it if we don't take care of the park well," she said.

She said they have started training Kalanguya folk to serve as tourist guides to discourage them from farming activities that threaten the mountain's ecosystem.

Park officials have imposed the mandatory hiring of guides for tourists. These guides will also serve as sweepers in the park.

Tour guides have also been authorized to impose rules on the mountain and bar tourists from entering specific areas in the mountain.

"(The guides do this) because they are the only people who will take care of the mountain. It is their abode and it is sacred to them," Tamiray said. ***Desiree Caluza and Jovelyn Reyes, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau***

Town pleads for Malacañang funding to save dying lake

By Aquiles Z. Zonio
PDI Mindanao Bureau

LAKE SEBU, South Cotabato—The municipal government is having problems on where to get funds to rehabilitate the dying Lake Lahit.

The 24-hectare lake, once teeming with fish and shrimps, is now covered with green water lilies, also known as water hyacinths.

The water level of Lahit, the smallest among the three lakes here, has decreased considerably due to the onslaught of water lilies.

The town was named after Lake Sebu, the biggest lake with a total area of 354 hectares. The other lake is Seloton, the deepest.

The municipal government wanted to save the lake, but it lacks the funds to do it.

Mayor Basilio Salif Sr. told the INQUIRER that cleaning up Lake Lahit would cost more than P1 million.

Salif said he already asked financial support from the provincial government and Malacañang. He was scheduled to leave for Manila Saturday to follow up his request for funding.

A source from the Municipal Planning Office revealed that the Japan Overseas Foster Parent had already approved the release of P1.6 million in grant for the rehabilitation of Lake Lahit. It is a joint project of the Sta. Cruz Mission and the local government.

But the actual clean-up operation is expected to start by August.

The mayor said the eradication of water lilies from Lake Lahit would be done manually.

"We expect the clean-up drive to wind up after more than one month. It will be done manually and by hectare," Salif said.

In 1997, there were 48 fish cages operating in Lake Lahit. Currently, not a single fish cage can be seen in any part of the lake.

The water lilies multiplied 10 times faster, the mayor said, prompting the fish cage operators to leave the area for Lake Sebu.

But several residents claimed that the onslaught of water lilies in Lake Lahit was a blessing in disguise.

"At least, nobody is now monopolizing the resources in Lake Lahit," they said.

After Lake Lahit, the clean-up of Lakes Sebu and Seloton will follow, the mayor disclosed.

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- Hanggang 100°C lamang ang boiling point.

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- Pinipigil ang build-up ng kalawang at corrosion.
- Pinapabuti ang takbo ng cooling system ng makina.
- Sinisiguro ang pag-iwas sa overheating ng sasakyan dahil hanggang 170°C ang boiling point.

Prestone II
Heavy Duty
LONGLIFE COOLANT CONCENTRATE
ANTI-BOIL ANTI-RUST
3 LITERS

Nasa mabuti kang kamay

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Northern Luzon will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and isolated thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to cloudy with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms.

SOURCE: PAGASA

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	HI34° Lo 24°
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	HI 26° Lo 15°
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	HI 35° Lo 26°
Laoag	Cloudy with Rains	HI 33° Lo 24°
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	HI 34° Lo 24°
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	HI 31° Lo 21°
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	HI 33° Lo 25°
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	HI 32° Lo 23°
Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy	HI 33° Lo 25°
Roxas	Partly Cloudy	HI 32° Lo 27°
Cebu	Partly Cloudy	HI 34° Lo 26°
Tacloban	Partly Cloudy	HI 32° Lo 25°
Gen. Santos	Partly Cloudy	HI 35° Lo 25°
Zamboanga	Partly Cloudy	HI 34° Lo 26°
Cagayan de Oro	Partly Cloudy	HI 33° Lo 23°
Davao	Partly Cloudy	HI 34° Lo 25°

Compiled by: Ray Leyesa, PQI Research/04/16/02

ROUNDUP

Woman electrocuted

PARANG, Maguindanao—An 80-year-old woman was electrocuted while another was injured here on Saturday. Town Councilor Dodong Teves said the victims–Hadja Sainar Diron, 80, and Mali Dimalaw, 70–were hanging their laundry on a cable attached to an electric post to dry. The two women suffered serious burns, Teves said.

Edwin Fernandez, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Pentagon men regroup

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—The Sultan Kudarat police vowed to wipe out remnants of the Pentagon kidnap gang operating in the province. Supt. Abubakar Mangelen, provincial police chief, said he had received reports that members of the gang were regrouping in Lambayong town. The group, composed of about 30 men, is now being led by a certain Commander Rizal Kitango, aide of captured Pentagon leader Faizal Marohombsar. Mangelen said Kitango's group were behind robberies, cattle rustling and extortion activities in Lambayong.

Aquiles Zonio, PDI Mindanao Bureau

No terrorists in Bicol?

LEGAZPI CITY—Chief Supt. Enrique Galang Jr., police regional director, has denied allegations that local terrorists have invaded the region and are in the city to create trouble. The allegations surfaced after two bombs were found in separate places in this city recently. Galang has directed the Legazpi police to increase its visibility in populated areas and business centers.

Tony Macasinag, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Couple nabbed for drugs

LEGAZPI CITY—Members of the Police Narcotics Group arrested a couple in a buy-bust operation in Barangay 34, this city, recently. Police identified those arrested as Amer and Erlinda Cadayon. Amer was caught in possession of one plastic sachet containing suspected shabu weighing 184 milligrams and worth about P500. Two plastic sachets containing the same substance and weighing 1,093 mg were recovered from Erlinda.

Tony Macasinag, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Fire chief shot dead

CABANATUAN CITY—A lone gunman shot and killed the chief of the Bureau of Fire Protection of San Leonardo, Nueva Ecija on Friday afternoon. Police said FO3 Francisco Jumaquio was waiting for a bus ride along the Maharlika Highway in San Leonardo when the gunman shot him at close range. Jumaquio died from six bullet wounds. Police said a man aboard a motorcycle picked up the gunman. The incident happened about 100 meters from the victim's office and the town police station.

Anselmo Roque, PDI Central Luzon Desk

Crash victims get P3,000

CABANATUAN CITY—President Macapagal-Arroyo on Thursday distributed checks worth P3,000 each to residents whose houses were damaged when a Philippine Air Force trainer jet crashed in Barangay M.S. Garcia here on Jan. 14. In a brief speech here, Ms Macapagal also promised to release P3 million for the victims or their families to enable them to rebuild their houses or finance livelihood activities. Forty-four residents received the checks, provided by the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office, from the President. Seven people died, 26 were hurt and several houses were burned when the plane burst into flames after hitting trees and houses in the village last Jan. 14.

Anselmo Roque, PDI Central Luzon Desk

Modern agri pushed

SCIENCE CITY OF MUÑOZ—President Macapagal-Arroyo has cited the critical need to improve the country's agriculture to solve poverty and for the country to cope with globalization. "In our fight against poverty, we need agricultural modernization that is based on social equity," Ms Macapagal said here during the 50th graduation program of the Central Luzon State University on Thursday. She said one of the steps needed to improve the plight of farmers is to equip them with knowledge and technology to help raise their productivity and efficiency.

Anselmo Roque, PDI Central Luzon Desk

120 families get power

HUNGDUAN, Ifugao—At least 120 families in two remote villages at the famous Ifugao rice terraces here will have access to electricity from a micro-hydroelectric plant built in the town this month. The plant, built in Sitio Howang, now generates five kilowatts of electricity to light up houses in Barangays Ba-ang and Nungullunan. The project was realized through the joint efforts of provincial and town officials, the Benguet State University-Annex and village officials. Gov. Teodoro Baguilat Jr. said the project was part of Ifugao's Rural Electrification Using Sustainable Energy (Re-use) program launched last year.

PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

LUZON WAR GAMES

New rules threaten to spoil R&R for GIs

By Tonette Orejas
PDI Central Luzon Desk

ANGELES CITY—Have you heard of rest and recreation (R & R) done in strict military discipline style?

American soldiers, as well as Filipino troops in the Balikatan 2002 that is set to start on April 22 in Luzon, are expected to unwind in this staid fashion, that is, if the Presidential Commission on the Visiting Forces Agreement, an inter-agency body monitoring the conduct of VFA-related war games, would have its way.

Jaime Yambao, VFACom executive director, announced that rule in a press conference here on Thursday.

"The VFACom expects the Balikatan 2002 to observe strict military discipline during the rest and recreation periods of the participants," he said, reading from a press statement.

Yambao is not playing naive to the realities of what goes on, for instance, on Fields Avenue, this city's red light district. Fields is just outside the perimeter of the Clark Special Economic Zone, one of Balikatan's four training sites.

Along this 3-km strip, women activists smirk at the phrase "rest and recreation," calling it a euphemism for prostitution. It has always been a social concern to both the commission and to leftist groups since VFA exercises resumed in 1999.

Yambao said he was instructed by President Macapagal-Arroyo not to allow prostitution to thrive via the joint military exercises.

When reporters began sharing to Yambao stories about American troops taking women to their hotel rooms, he went on to defend the visiting soldiers. About 2,000 American soldiers are expected to participate in the exercises, which will end on May 6.

He said it was "unfair to assume that the US troops are here just for that."

Yambao, who assumed the post only early this year, did not say how strict military discipline-styled R & R would be done. He only went as much as saying that the participants would be "as before, going out in groups within a designated perimeter to selected establishments with armed Philippine National Police providing force protection."

But hearing the R & R rule for the first time, commercial sex workers—the way the city government calls the men and women working in bars and on Fields Avenue—are laughing at the idea.

"What do they think of bars? Barracks? And we are not going to sit and stand stiff like military people do," Rachel, a bar dancer in her 20s, told the INQUIRER.

"We are here to entertain. We want the greenbacks," she added.

The deep obsession to earn dollars will take her to as far as allowing herself to be on a "bar fine," a scheme in which the customer pays both the nightclub owner and the woman for the sexual service she renders for the night.

"Bar fine," the evidence that prostitution exists, is prohibited by the city government.

"Women here don't earn by simply sitting and chatting with our customers," Rachel explained. "Drinks and sex bring in the money."

But to bar managers who have worked on Fields for more than three decades, things have not been pretty much the same.

Most of the visiting US soldiers in the last three years had not been rowdy.

And many had not spent much, according to Evelyn who had worked in bars in Angeles and Olongapo cities during the heydays of Clark and Subic Naval Base in Zambales.

"Some just drink and eat," she observed.

On food alone, Yambao said each American soldier has $16 (P816) to spend daily.

Evelyn noticed that the recent batches of US soldiers have been very discreet in "dating" the women. And she hesitated to talk about that either.

The fact, however, is that Fields Avenue often gives a rousing welcome to US soldiers.

Nightclubs, diners, sauna baths, karaoke bars, hotels, discos, hobby shops—numbering more than 200—undergo some facelift.

N. Samar faces same fate as Aklan over unpaid power bill

TACLOBAN CITY—The National Power Corp. has given the Northern Samar Electric Cooperative (Norsamelco) until the end of this month to pay at least P7.8 million in power bills or face disconnection.

But Ricardo Largo, Norsamelco manager, said his office might not be able to pay up because the electric cooperative does not have money.

The Norsamelco, he said, only relies on payment collected from its consumers. If its consumers failed to pay their bills on time, he added, the electric cooperative could not also pay its power bills to the Napocor.

It was learned that this was the third time that the Norsamelco received a warning from the Napocor for nonpayment of power bills. The first was in November last year and the second was last March.

Records at the Napocor showed that Norsamelco owes the Napocor P7.8 million in unpaid power bills for January and February.

Largo said the Norsamelco would be able to pay the Napocor only if its consumers would pay their bills on time.

He said that the cooperative could collect P20 million from many of its consumers who have not paid their power bills since October last year.

The cooperative is supplying power to most of the 24 towns in Northern Samar. Largo said only 15 percent of its 25,918 consumers pay their bills on time.

The Napocor's pass-on rate in Northern Samar is P4.36 per kilowatt-hour, plus P1.76 in power purchase adjustment.

The Napocor had cut off power supply to the Aklan Electric Cooperative, affecting about 58,000 residents of Aklan's 17 towns, including Malay where Boracay Island belongs, and two towns in Antique, for failing to pay P105 million in unpaid power bills for the past four months.

Electricity was restored at 5 p.m. on March 20 after a three-man management team from the NEA took over the Akelco operations.

If the Napocor decides to disconnect its power supply to Northern Samar, only the consumers are to be blamed, Largo said.

"I cannot do anything if Napocor will implement its plan to disconnect its supply to us. Most of the electric consumers here do not pay their monthly dues on time," he told the INQUIRER.

He said the majority of the consumers do not pay their bills on time. Government offices were among those that failed to settle their accounts with the Norsamelco.

Largo, however, refused to divulge the names of their delinquent consumers.

He said there were instances when the consumers harassed the cooperative's bill collectors.

One time, he said, a collector went to a house to demand payment. But the collector was met instead by a German Shepherd. ***Cynthia Borgueta, PDI Visayas Bureau***

Science City's newest test tube carabao named after GMA

By Anselmo Roque
PDI Central Luzon Desk

GLORY, test tube carabao named after President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

BEN MOSES EBREO

SCIENCE CITY OF MUÑOZ—Meet "Glory," the country's latest test tube carabao whose embryo was developed in a laboratory in India.

The female carabao, weighing 44 kilograms at birth, was born on April 5, incidentally the 55th birthday of President Macapagal-Arroyo, at the Philippine Carabao Center national gene pool here.

Officials of the PCC said they named the carabao "Glory" because its birth ushered in a "glorious" moment in the PCC's research program.

Dr. Libertado Cruz, executive director of the PCC inside the campus of the Central Luzon State University, said Glory's birth "gave glory to the scientists who developed the technique that led to her birth."

He said the name "Glory" was also in recognition of the fact that the carabao was born on the birthday of Ms Macapagal, whose first name is Gloria.

Cruz said "Glory" weighed 11 kg more than the 33-kg average weight of carabao calves born in the country.

"Glory promises to be a top of the line dairy animal capable of producing milk at 4,422 liters per lactation or an average of 14.74 liters a day," he said.

She is also the first riverine buffalo calf in the world developed through a process called "vitrified-thawed in vitro produced embryo."

In this process, according to Cruz, the embryo was developed in the laboratory of a PCC satellite station in India and was subjected to ultra rapid cooling by vitrification method.

Vitrification, Cruz explained, is a simplified method of freezing embryos without the need for sophisticated and expensive equipment.

After the embryo was flown into the country, it was thawed and then transferred to a surrogate mother carabao.

Cruz said it was the first time that such procedure was done in the world in reproductive biotechnology for water buffalo and probably other animals.

"Glory" became the toast of scientists here as her arrival was keenly awaited. She affirmed the perfection of a new reproductive biotechnique that is more advanced than the one used for the development of "Maganda," the first test tube carabao in Southeast Asia.

"Maganda," born on Oct. 28, 1996 and called in jest the "tubeless carabao" by then President Joseph Estrada, originated from fresh in vitro (outside of the body) embryo transferred through the use of a transfer gun.

The fresh in-vitro should be transferred to a surrogate mother carabao within two hours or it will die, Cruz said.

In the new technique used for the development of "Glory," the embryo can be stored for an indefinite time without losing its viability. The embryo is as big as the tip of a strand of hair and placed in plastic straws. It is kept in a nitrogen thermos bottle whose temperature is minus 190 degrees Celsius.

Cruz said for the new process, which is part of the project called "Production of high genetics water buffaloes through the use of reproductive biotechniques," a PCC satellite embryo biotechnology station was set up in Aurangabad, India.

He said Frigorifico Allana Ltd. (FAL), one of the major meat exporters of India, helped the PCC in the project.

FAL slaughters more than 1,000 water buffaloes a day. The ovaries of the slaughtered female buffaloes, which contained genetic materials (the oocytes or immature and unfertilized eggs), are harnessed in the project, Cruz said.

He added that the eggs were matured in the laboratory and fertilized in-vitro with the best semen of selected bulls in India.

"The embryos produced are of very high genetic quality," he said.

"Glory," Cruz said, is a pure Murrah buffalo calf from the egg of a female Murrah buffalo and the sperm cell of top bulls from India.

He said "Glory" had a higher genetic value and would be a very valuable resource for improving milk and meat production.

He said the team in India—composed of Danilda Duran, Dr. Prudencio Pedro and Rogelio Hufana—brought home hundreds of frozen embryos and many had been transferred to surrogate mother carabaos in the country.

Many more "Glorys" are expected to be born soon, Cruz said.

The project is supported by the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Science and Technology and the Philippine Council for Agriculture, Forestry and Natural Resources Research and Development (PCARRD), with the cooperation of the National Dairy Development Board of India.

Several thousands of cryo-preserved embryos are expected to be brought to the Philippines by the team soon.

Cruz gave assurance that the technique used in developing "Glory" was a fast way of producing quality carabaos in the country.

This technique, he said, had a very high rate of success compared to artificial insemination and natural mating.

He said this technology would do away with the transport of live animals, which is very risky and expensive.

The cost of imported high quality buffaloes, it was learned, is estimated at P130,000 each.

Developing water buffalo embryos in India under the PCC technique is estimated to cost only P2,300 per embryo, PCC officials said.

Pangasinan fish cages ordered dismantled

BOLINAO, Pangasinan—The Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources has asked officials in four towns in the province to dismantle fish traps and other fishery structures that impede the flow of water toward here.

The BFAR gave the order to hasten the cleansing of the town's polluted sea.

BFAR Director Malcolm Sarmiento on Saturday met with local government representatives from the towns of Bani, Anda, Alaminos and Bolinao to devise a plan of action on the demolition of structures that block not only the tide's flow but also navigational routes.

Sarmiento said if the concerned local governments would not order the demolition of the structures, Agriculture Secretary Leonardo Montemayor will carry it out.

Sarmiento inspected the length of the Tambac Bay in Alaminos leading to the Kakiputan Channel in Bolinao and Anda after a fish kill recurred in Bolinao recently. He said he found 156 fish structures in the area.

The recent fish kill had affected cultured *bangus* kept in cages and coral fishes like *sapsap* (slipmouth), *barangen* (rabbit fish), *malaga* and *bolasi* (mullet) in Bolinao and parts of Anda. In February, a massive fish kill hit Bolinao, resulting in losses worth P600 million to the aquaculture industry.

Sarmiento said that because of the fishery structures in the rivers, water could not freely flow into the sea and prevent pollutants from being washed out.

The pollutants, mostly uneaten fish feed that have accumulated at the sea bottom, are among the causes of fish kills.

Sarmiento said he was assured by local officials that they will cooperate with the clearing of the waterways "because they have realized that if we will not do this, the fish kill will be a recurring problem."

A soil and water test conducted by the BFAR research center in Dagupan City showed that the level of hydrogen sulfide, a toxic gas, was still high in the aquaculture areas in Bolinao.

The BFAR has cautioned aquaculture operators not to re-stock their cages because the high level of hydrogen sulfide can cause another fish kill.

Despite the warning, many operators stocked their cages, but most of these newly stocked *bangus* floated dead.

Hydrogen sulfide is a toxic gas produced by anaerobic bacteria present in the soil. In Bolinao, it was caused by amino acids in the uneaten fish feed that settled at the sea bottom.

"The excess feed, dead planktons and *bangus* wastes combined to make a suitable breeding ground for anaerobic bacteria that produced hydrogen sulfide," said Westly Rosario, chief of the BFAR research center. ***Yolanda Fuertes, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau***

Vice mayor held by cultists freed

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY—Suspected members of the anti-communist Tadtad cult abducted the vice mayor of Jasaan town in Misamis Oriental on Sunday night.

Gov. Antonio Calingin said they were still trying to find the kidnappers and negotiate for the release of Vice Mayor Juan Po. Po was freed from his captors several hours after he was seized.

Po, 73, was snatched from his farmhouse in Barangay Magaod in Claveria town at around 8 p.m. Sunday.

The seven suspects, allegedly members of the Sagrado Corazon Jesus, were led by Ferdinand Acosta alias Datu Macabali. ***Butch Enerio and Grace Albasin, PDI Mindanao Bureau***

Chavez reaches out to army

CARACAS—After surviving a failed coup attempt, Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez worked Sunday to improve his relations with the military while urging troops to forge a closer bond with civilian society.

"The importance of uniting the people with the armed forces must be preserved and strengthened," Chavez told paratroopers at a military base in Maracay, 80 km west of Caracas. "Otherwise, we could still be fighting in the streets."

Emergency workers tallied 41 deaths and 323 injuries in the wake of Thursday's demonstrations that led up to Chavez's temporary removal from power.

The Maracay paratrooper outfit, in which Chavez once served, was the first unit to publicly defy a civilian-military coup that deposed him Friday, a key move that led to the interim government's resignation Saturday and Chavez's return.

Aware that some troops participated in the coup, Chavez sought to reestablish military affinity with the citizenry against the elite that deposed him.

At the same time, he held out an olive branch to the political opposition after his swearing-in early Sunday.

"There will be no witch hunts, no persecution, no disrespect for free expression or thought," Chavez said, calling for calm. "The country needs an opposition that is loyal to the country, that offers the nation real criticism and alternatives."

But Defense Minister Jose Vicente Rangel said the members of the military, who participated in the coup attempt, had been handed over to justice officials.

"They are now in the hands of the attorney general and the military prosecutors," Rangel said in a television interview.

Meanwhile, authorities tried to cope with looters, who appeared to have taken advantage of tensions in the capital and attacked a number of shops, particularly in poor neighborhoods.

"The situation is difficult right now," said a Caracas police official, who wanted to maintain anonymity. "We have many areas to cover. We are overwhelmed."

CHAVEZ addressing the nation from the presidential palace April 14 with crucifix in hand. AFP

In Washington, the US government called on Chavez to respect democracy and reach out to his political opponents, saying the coup was a "clear message" to change the direction of his administration.

"The people of Venezuela have sent a clear message to President Chavez that they want both democracy and reform. The Chavez administration has an opportunity to respond to this message by correcting its course and governing in a fully democratic manner," the White House said in a statement. *AFP*

Sharon seen generating 'worldwide anti-Israelism'

PARIS—Former French premier Michel Rocard on Monday accused Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon of "producing worldwide anti-Israelism."

In a long open letter to Sharon published in the daily Le Figaro, Rocard wrote: "You are producing worldwide anti-Israelism and people like me, who have fought anti-Semitism since they were very young, are powerless to hold back the torrent of anger and hatred to which you have opened the floodgates."

"You are waging a war that you cannot win," Rocard continued. "Each action by (the Israeli Army) creates a dozen new terrorists . . . Well, there are two million Palestinians . . . How many will you have to kill? Several hundred thousand? Half a million?"

The former French prime minister suggested that the international community would not permit this.

Addressing "the head of those in power in Israel" and not Sharon personally, Rocard went on: "You have chosen force, you could have not done so. This has a price . . . The first element to pay, the most immediate, is the complete destruction of any hope—and that is now done."

The Socialist former premier said Sharon had not learned the lessons of lost wars by the "dominant" countries like France in Indochina and Algeria, the United States in Vietnam or the Soviet Union in Afghanistan, which had refused to negotiate with their adversaries.

"Where in history have you seen that a warlord can choose his adversary?" asked Rocard accusing Sharon, if not wanting to kill Yasser Arafat, of "working on paralyzing him, humiliating him and trying to exile him."

"The excessiveness of your calculations on the use of force is disturbing for a mankind that needs to live in peace," concluded Rocard, explaining that he understood Sharon's "motivations" concerning Israel's security but was simply questioning his "strategic choices" to achieve them.

In related news, French President Jacques Chirac on Sunday fiercely denounced the desecration of a Jewish cemetery in Strasbourg—the latest of a number of anti-Semitic incidents that have flared in the eastern city and in France generally.

"These are scandalous acts that go against the very foundations of the French identity," Chirac told the Progres newspaper. "They must be fought against with all our forces."

Vandals last Friday daubed 21 graves and a wall of the cemetery, in the northern suburb of Kronenbourg, with anti-Semitic and pro-Nazi graffiti and swastikas. *AFP*

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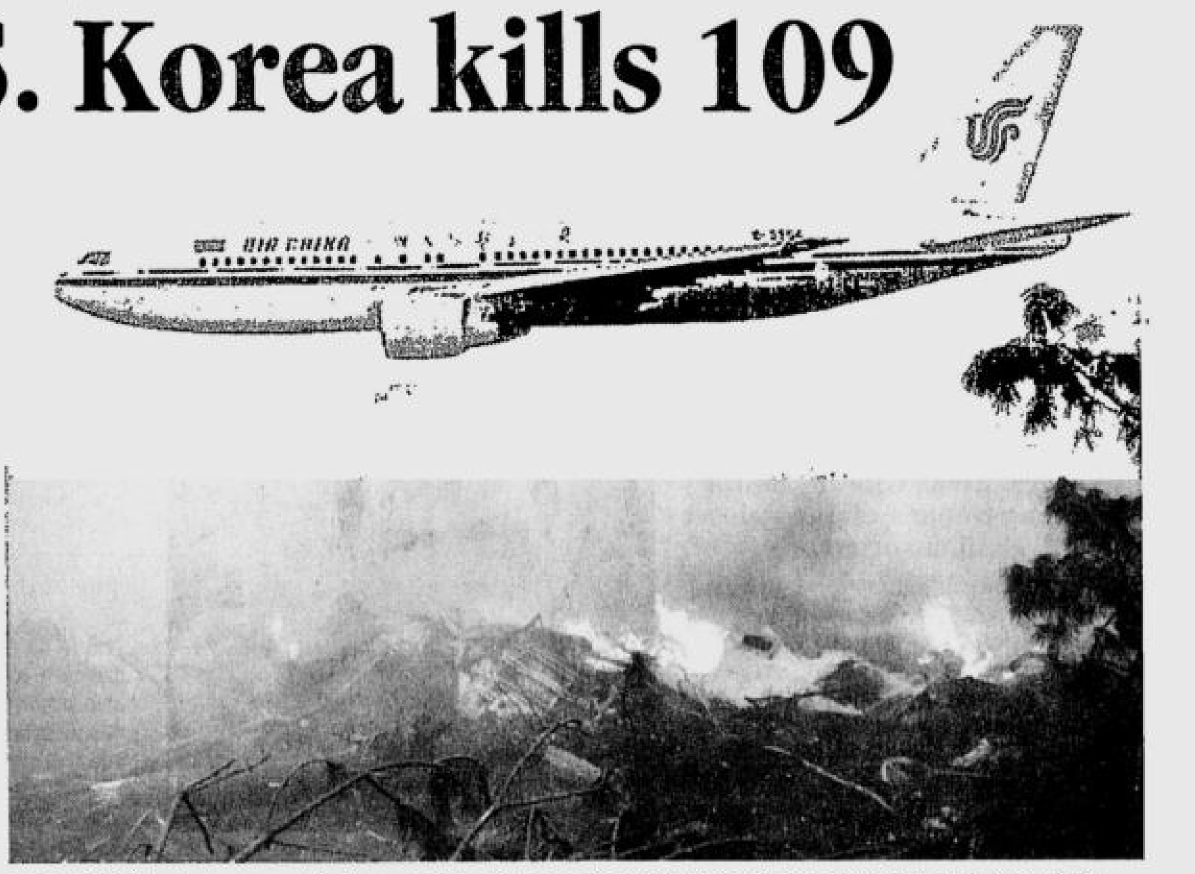
China plane crash in S. Korea kills 109



COMPOSITE photo shows (top) an undated image of an Air China Boeing 762-200 and (above) fire billowing from the wreckage of an Air China plane which crashed while trying to land in poor weather in Busan April 15. Rescuers said 47 people survived the crash after flight CA129 carrying 155 passengers and 11 crewmembers from Beijing to Busan smashed into a hill. AFP/INQART

GIMHAE, South Korea—An Air China jet carrying 166 people smashed into a fog-shrouded mountain in South Korea on Monday with at least 109 people confirmed dead, officials said.

Rescuers found 47 people alive, but mainly badly injured, in the wreckage of the Boeing 767-200 jet which was on a flight from Beijing to the southern city of Busan, officials said. Ten people were unaccounted for.

Flight CA129 crashed at 11:23 a.m. (10:23 a.m. in Manila) after aborting a first attempt to land in bad weather at Busan-Gimhae international airport, 4 km north of the south coast city, a transport ministry official said.

Fires in the wreckage took four hours to put out; witnesses said.

Rescuers fought up two paths that in places were almost vertical or knee deep in mud to get to the crash scene at the top of the Shineo mountain. Some survivors had to be carried down on the backs of policemen or soldiers.

It was Asia's worst aviation disaster since a Singapore Airlines Boeing 747 crashed on Oct. 30 after attempting to take off from a closed runway at Taipei airport, killing 78 of the 179 people on board.

Busan, South Korea's second largest city, will be one of the venues for the football World Cup finals which start in less than 50 days.

The Air China jet slammed into the 400-meter high Shineo mountain in the adjoining city of Gimhae, flattening hundreds of trees and spreading flaming wreckage across a wide area.

Hundreds of local residents watched as rescue workers carried smoldering bodies away from the site, television reports showed.

A nearby apartment block would have been in its path had the jet continued on its course toward the airport 8 km away. The airport was immediately closed because of the accident and bad weather. No casualties on the ground were reported.

Shin Mi-Ja, a fire department official at the government administration ministry, said the plane had been turning to make a second attempt to land.

Rescue officials believe the tail of the jet hit the ground first as most of the survivors were in the front section, Yonhap news agency reported.

The plane was trying to land but pulled up because of strong winds and hit Shineo mountain as it turned in preparation for a new landing attempt, aviation officials at Gimhae airport told Yonhap.

China's state-controlled aviation administration said there were 19 Chinese, one Uzbek and 135 South Korean passengers on board.

South Korean government accident investigators were quickly at the scene and the black box flight data recorder was recovered on Monday afternoon, officials said. **AFP**

India media condemn 'unmasked' Vajpayee

NEW DELHI—Indian newspapers flagged obituaries Monday for the moderate image of Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee and offered scathing critiques of his apparent resurrection as the champion of partisan Hindu nationalism.

"Unmasked Truth," "Thus Spake the Mask" were the titles of just two editorials in national dailies following Vajpayee's performance at the executive meeting of his Hindu nationalist BJP party that ended on Sunday in the coastal resort state of Goa.

The focus of the media's scorn was Vajpayee's speech to the conclave on Friday in which he launched what the Times of India described as a "sweeping, gratuitous attack" on India's Muslims, saying they were unable to live in peace with others.

Vajpyee's belated clarification that he was referring solely to Islamic fundamentalists did little to mollify press commentators.

"Even discounting the hyperbole, Mr. Vajpayee's unwarranted diatribe against a section of his own people will be difficult to reconcile with his image of being a moderate," the Times said.

Vajpayee's comments had come as a "grave shock" to a nation still reeling from an eruption of sectarian violence in Gujarat which has claimed more than 800 lives, it added.

The Indian Express declared Vajpayee to have been "transmogrified" and warned that he was in danger of denying his constitutional obligations by adopting the language of "sectarianism and retribution."

Most editorials slammed the decision of the BJP executive in Goa to reject the tendered resignation of Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi. He has been vilified by the opposition and human rights groups for failing to curb the violent Hindu backlash that followed the Feb. 27 attack by a Muslim mob on train carrying Hindu activists.

The executive ruled that, rather than resign, Modi should seek a fresh mandate in early elections—a move viewed by most commentators as a cynical attempt to cash in on the wave of Hindu revivalism that followed the communal violence in Gujarat.

"This takes the politics of opportunism to new levels of insensitivity," the Express said.

The BJP's Hindu nationalist roots have never been in doubt, but since the party came to power at the head of a multi-party coalition, it has sought to downplay its hardline leanings and promote a moderate image that was acceptable to its more secular-minded allies.

The most public face of that image has been Vajpayee himself, but the media verdict on Monday was that Goa had finally removed the moderate veil from the prime minister's face.

"His varying pronouncements suggest that either he has no convictions, or that he lacks the guts to stand up to the hardliners in the party," the Hindustan Times said.

"In any event, the mask of moderation is now gone." **AFP**

Counting begins after E. Timor's historic poll

DILI, East Timor—Election officials Monday began counting votes from East Timor's first presidential polls as political leaders predicted a landslide victory for former resistance leader Xanana Gusmao.

Sunday's vote marked the final step in the former Indonesian territory's quarter-century struggle for nationhood. International monitors said it was a success with voter turnout estimated at 86.3 percent.

Ballot papers were moved to counting centers on Sunday night. They were being tallied Monday. Results are not expected until Wednesday, officials said.

"Xanana will be the clear winner with more than 80 percent," said Mario Carrascalao, who heads the opposition Social Democratic Party.

East Timor's new Constitution stipulates a parliamentary system with a strong government and a largely symbolic role for the president.

"Xanana will become a referee. If people break the democratic process he will bring them back into line," Carrascalao said.

Privately, Gusmao's campaign staff predicted he would win more than three-quarters of much of the territory in a systematic campaign of revenge. The violence only stopped a month later when international peacekeepers arrived.

Do Amaral served as president for nine days after Portuguese colonial rule collapsed in 1975 and before Indonesia invaded on Dec. 7, 1975. **AP**

Fugitive Omar assails 'crusade' in Afghanistan

DUBAI—Fugitive Taliban leader Mullah Mohammad Omar has condemned a "crusade" launched by the United States in Afghanistan and continued in the Palestinian territories, according to a newspaper on Monday.

"The massacres of Palestinians by the Israeli Army is proof that the war against Islam and Muslims is an open crusade," the Arabic daily Al-Hayat quoted Omar as saying in a statement.

"After America launched its war against Islam in Afghanistan . . . the Jews are doing the same today against Muslim people in Palestine," he said.

"All of it is carried out with American weapons, American money and backed by American decisions," added the statement to the London-based newspaper.

"Who can believe that America wants to fight the terrorism she herself practices in such a shameful way?" Omar asked, vowing to pursue his struggle against Washington.

"Do the Americans want us to see the colonizers live in security . . . without us fighting those who have taken away our rights?"

Omar fled from Kandahar when his stronghold in southern Afghanistan fell last December.

He was reported to have gone into hiding with tribesmen in Helmand province but then to have moved on.

The United States launched a war in Afghanistan on Oct. 7, overthrowing the Taliban government in Kabul and routing its al-Qaida allies.

Al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden, the chief suspect for the Sept. 11 bombings in the United States, has also disappeared. **AFP**

Gov warns of unrest among poppy farmers

AN AFGHAN woman harvests wheat in front of a poppy field in Jalalabad April 14. Though authorities are trying to convince farmers in eastern Afghanistan to grow wheat, many continue to grow poppies as the cash yield for opium is much higher. AFP

JALALABAD, Afghanistan—The Afghan government's controversial program to eradicate all opium-producing poppy fields risks sparking major unrest, the governor of Jalalabad warned Sunday.

The interim administration is test-driving the program in Nangahar province, of which Jalalabad is the capital, but Gov. Abdul Qadir attempted to distance himself from the project.

Speaking after a meeting with some 300 village elders who told him of their unhappiness over the eradication program, Qadir—the most powerful man in eastern Afghanistan—said he was only following orders.

"The people told us that first you must kill us and then destroy the fields. They told me they are prepared to lie down in front of tanks if necessary," he said.

"I am obeying the orders of the central government, I have explained to the (central government) the negative and positive reasons. Everyone is angry and no one is happy."

Qadir admitted that the compensation package of $350 per 2,500 sq. m. was "not perfect," especially coming off the back of a three-year drought. **AFP**

PARTICIPATION OF OVERSEAS PAKISTANIS IN REFERENDUM ON APRIL 30, 2002

Overseas Pakistanis of 18 years and above, including those holding dual nationality, may participate in the Referendum being conducted in Pakistan on 30 April 2002, by casting their vote personally in the Embassy, or, by postal ballots.

Pakistanis wishing to cast their ballot personally may do so from 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. on 30th April 2002 at the Embassy premises, at 6th Floor, Alexander House, 132-Amorsolo Street, Legaspi Village, Makati City, Metro Manila (Phone No. 632-8172772 & 817-2776). They are requested to bring along their National Identity Card or Pakistan passport and its photocopy.

Pakistanis wishing to cast their ballot by post, may apply for ballot papers to the Embassy immediately, on prescribed application forms. These application forms may be obtained from the above address personally, or, by writing to the Embassy at the above address or at P.O. Box 2050 MCC, Makati, Metro Manila, or, by conveying the applicant's address on fax numbers at (02) 8400229 and (02) 8931483, or, from the website of the Election Commission of Pakistan at www.ecp.gov.pk. In case a fax number is provided, the Embassy will fax the application form. The last date for submission of application forms is 20th April 2002. A copy of the National Identity Card or of the first three pages of the Pakistani passport should be sent along with the application forms. Application forms and requisite documents may be sent to the Embassy at above fax numbers, or by post, at the above address. Ballot papers will immediately be sent by post to the applicants.

Postal ballots, duly marked by the voters, should reach the Embassy by 29th April 2002 at the latest.

Embassy of Pakistan
MANILA

Japan military becomes very active

By Hans Greimel

YOKOTA AIR BASE, Japan—Emblazoned with a red rising sun, the jungle-green Japanese cargo plane dips out of a hazy sky to pick up a 3-ton load of US war supplies bound for the Afghanistan campaign.

The payload is mostly tires and toilet paper. But that hardly dents the enthusiasm of Kaoru Enokida, a master sergeant in the Japanese Air Self Defense Force.

"It feels so good to be useful. We're giving it our all," Enokida boasts of the almost daily flights shuttling US supplies out of this Tokyo air base that was once used by Imperial Army war planes but now is home to the US Air Force.

The Sept. 11 terrorist attacks have done what nearly 60 years of post-World War II penitence couldn't. They justified a military makeover that is keeping Japan's armed forces their busiest since 1945.

Bound by the country's postwar pacifist Constitution, few Japanese soldiers over the past several decades have been in harm's way, let alone seen combat.

But now, Japanese transport planes are ferrying supplies to Pakistan, destroyers are patrolling the Indian Ocean and armored cars are keeping the peace in foreign lands.

"This can be considered a turning point," said Makoto Momoi, former research director for national security at the National Defense College, Japan's version of West Point. "We're seeing a lot of changes."

Japan's beefed up military pleases Washington, which has long leaned on Tokyo to do more as a regional watchdog and counterbalance to China.

But it's also a worry to some of Japan's neighbors. To many, the sight of ships flying the rising sun flag triggers memories of invasion and anxiety over a rebirth of Japanese militarism.

The changes have been shepherded by Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, who pledged to restore the military's luster and has so far delivered.

Feeling vulnerable in the wake of Sept. 11, opposition parties barely blinked when Koizumi pushed through a groundbreaking anti-terrorism law in October that widened the military's role.

Under its auspices, Japan has sent eight warships to the Afghan theater in support of the US-led war.

Among other military milestones was the passage in March of a record $37.5 billion defense budget for 2002. It is the biggest budget ever for Japan's 260,000 military personnel.

Japan also embarked on its biggest deployment of peacekeepers this winter with the dispatch of advance contingents to the former Indonesian territory of East Timor, where 700 Japanese soldiers will eventually serve. Among their hardware are some 70 armored cars and military trucks.

Japan's military makeup remains strictly defensive—with no bombers, aircraft carriers or long-range missiles to project force. But as the East Timor mission demonstrates, any muscle flexing can cause problems.

Protesters shouted at Japanese military engineers when they arrived at the territory's airport, angry over the Imperial Army's slaughter of 50,000 East Timorese civilians during World War II.

Support at home for the military buildup could melt away once the war in Afghanistan winds down and if fear of terrorism wanes, especially if there are Japanese casualties during any of the operations, analysts say.

"Acceptance of the self defense forces is high right now, but Koizumi has taken advantage of the timing," Momoi said. "Most Japanese still distrust the military." **AP**

Divers plunge into probe of ferry fire

By Philip C. Tubeza

DIVERS have been brought in to help with the investigation of the fire that killed at least 32 people on the MV Maria Carmela passenger ferry that sank on Sunday, three days after a fast-moving fire broke out near the end of an overnight trip from Masbate to Lucena City.

The divers also will look for more bodies aboard the stricken vessel, which was carrying at least 324 passengers, 81 of whom were not listed on the passenger manifest.

The death toll rose to 32 yesterday after Coast Guard divers recovered six bodies from the wreck yesterday.

Three of the bodies were found in the pilot room and the other three in the cabin section.

The sinking may hamper efforts to discover the cause of the fire, which was believed to have started on a lower level for vehicles and cargo. The Coast Guard has urged witnesses to come forward.

Many of those who died drowned after failing to grab life vests before they jumped into the sea.

The Coast Guard has denied that the MV Maria Carmela was intentionally sunk.

Lt. Armand Balilo, PCG spokesperson, said that while the ship's sinking would hamper the investigation, the Coast Guard's divers were capable of retrieving "evidence" from the ship, which lies some 45 feet below the sea about one nautical mile from Lucena's Dalahican pier.

Relatives of the missing passengers have accused the vessel's owners, the Montenegro Shipping Co., of "maneuvering" to have the ship sunk to erase any trace of evidence of their negligence.

Balilo explained that the ship sank because its structure, particularly the hull, had been weakened by the four-day fire.

"There's no truth to those accusations. If we wanted to sink it, we would have done it earlier," he said.

"We tried to preserve the ship as much as possible but it just collapsed," he added.

He said Coast Guard divers were also equipped with underwater cameras that can be used to get still photos of possible evidence. Japanese Coast Guard Commander Kiyotaka Noma, a search and rescue expert with the Japanese International Cooperation (Jica) office in the country, is also helping the Coast Guard.

He said frogmen had begun scouring the sunken vessel last Sunday and found "body parts in the bridge."

Investigators are still trying to find out what started the fire in the ship on Thursday morning.

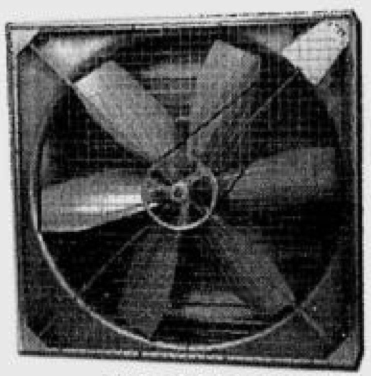
Besides the copra in the cargo section, they are also looking into reports that engine trouble may have started the fire.

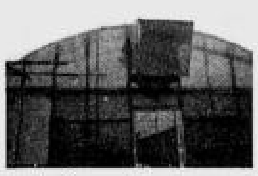
Coast Guard chief Vice Admiral Reuben Lista said earlier that his men were also checking reports that somebody may have deliberately started the fire.

"We will look into it. But I don't think that was what happened," Lista said.

A source told the INQUIRER that an initial investigation showed that the ship's officers might have violated safety regulations by placing the ship's cargo of copra near an exhaust pipe in the storage section.

With a report from AP





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Cuenco: 'I was quoted out of context'

CUENCO

A LEGISLATOR yesterday said he was taken out of context when an INQUIRER report published Monday (April 15) quoted him as saying that moves to amend the Constitution were meant to benefit Speaker Jose de Venecia.

Rep. Antonio Cuenco, in a two-paragraph statement, said he was quoted out of context and the "headline is misleading" in the story titled "Shift to parliamentary gov't ploy to make De Venecia PM, says solon."

In that report, Cuenco was quoted as saying that De Venecia wanted a parliamentary system of government through direct amendments by Congress "because he can't get himself elected in a presidential form of government."

"What I said was that the better mode of effecting changes in the Constitution was through a Constitutional Convention and not through direct amendments made by Congress which are suspect," said Cuenco in his statement.

"Proposals made by Congress can be branded as self-serving and designed to promote the interests of some politicians," he said.

"It was never my intention to denigrate either the Speaker or any other member of the House on whom I have the highest respect," he added.

Visitors warned on strict ban on leaving wastes on Mt. Pulag

KABAYAN, Benguet—"Biodegradable" may sound environment-friendly but not to protectors of the Mt. Pulag National Park here.

Emerita Tamiray, park superintendent, said they are strictly prohibiting visitors from leaving anything, even biodegradable materials such as leftover food, on Mt. Pulag's summit to protect cloud rats (*Crateromis schaderdergi*) that may be poisoned by materials alien to them.

Tamiray said biodegradable materials (anything that is capable of being broken down by natural processes, such as bacterial action) could kill cloud rats, which have been under the list of endemic wildlife species since Mt. Pulag has been declared as a national protected area system.

Mt. Pulag, at 2,922 meters above sea level, is Luzon's highest mountain and the country's second highest mountain next to Mt. Apo in Davao del Sur.

"If you carry microbes alien to the park, it will wipe out native species. We do not want that to happen. Spitting is not allowed, too," Tamiray told a group of reporters who climbed the mountain last week.

"Biodegradable materials will contaminate the park and can poison the wildlife that can ingest leftover food. Fruits and other spoiled food left in the park can kill some endemic species," she said.

She said that even bringing pets to the park, like cats and dogs, is not allowed because these are potential carriers of diseases that could affect the wildlife, vegetation and the indigenous people in the park's surroundings.

Tamiray said the population of cloud rats in the park has slowly diminished because hunters seek the animals for their fur.

Park officials also prohibit smoking, washing and taking baths in the park's spring waters and building camp fires.

Tamiray said Pulag is also in peril as villagers living near it continue to clear forests by means of *kaingin* (slash-and-burn and farming).

She said the Kalanguya tribal folk living in Barangay Lusod, about 20 km from Pulag's grassland trail, had started farming activities that could destroy the natural beauty of the park.

She, however, said they could not blame the villagers because farming is their only means of livelihood.

Last month's burning of at least 50 of 800 hectares of the mountain's grassland also contributed to the deterioration of the park, she said.

She said they were still determining the source of the fire that affected parts of Pulag.

"The deterioration of the park is slow, but it is possible that the mountain's wildlife will be gone before we even know it if we don't take care of the park well," she said.

She said they have started training Kalanguya folk to serve as tourist guides to discourage them from farming activities that threaten the mountain's ecosystem.

Park officials have imposed the mandatory hiring of guides for tourists. These guides will also serve as sweepers in the park.

Tour guides have also been authorized to impose rules on the mountain and bar tourists from entering specific areas in the mountain.

"(The guides do this) because they are the only people who will take care of the mountain. It is their abode and it is sacred to them," Tamiray said. ***Desiree Caluza and Jovelyn Reyes, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau***

Town pleads for Malacañang funding to save dying lake

By Aquiles Z. Zonio
PDI Mindanao Bureau

LAKE SEBU, South Cotabato—The municipal government is having problems on where to get funds to rehabilitate the dying Lake Lahit.

The 24-hectare lake, once teeming with fish and shrimps, is now covered with green water lilies, also known as water hyacinths.

The water level of Lahit, the smallest among the three lakes here, has decreased considerably due to the onslaught of water lilies.

The town was named after Lake Sebu, the biggest lake with a total area of 354 hectares. The other lake is Seloton, the deepest.

The municipal government wanted to save the lake, but it lacks the funds to do it.

Mayor Basilio Salif Sr. told the INQUIRER that cleaning up Lake Lahit would cost more than P1 million.

Salif said he already asked financial support from the provincial government and Malacañang. He was scheduled to leave for Manila Saturday to follow up his request for funding.

A source from the Municipal Planning Office revealed that the Japan Overseas Foster Parent had already approved the release of P1.6 million in grant for the rehabilitation of Lake Lahit. It is a joint project of the Sta. Cruz Mission and the local government.

But the actual clean-up operation is expected to start by August.

The mayor said the eradication of water lilies from Lake Lahit would be done manually.

"We expect the clean-up drive to wind up after more than one month. It will be done manually and by hectare," Salif said.

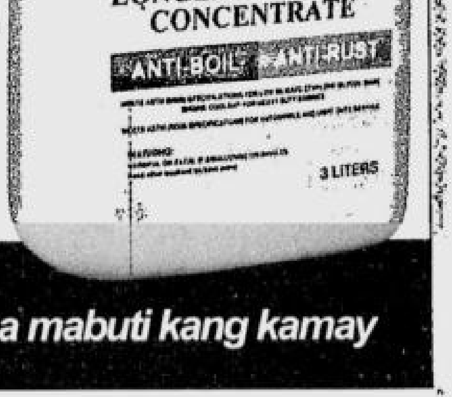
In 1997, there were 48 fish cages operating in Lake Lahit. Currently, not a single fish cage can be seen in any part of the lake.

The water lilies multiplied 10 times faster, the mayor said, prompting the fish cage operators to leave the area for Lake Sebu.

But several residents claimed that the onslaught of water lilies in Lake Lahit was a blessing in disguise.

"At least, nobody is now monopolizing the resources in Lake Lahit," they said.

After Lake Lahit, the clean-up of Lakes Sebu and Seloton will follow, the mayor disclosed.



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Nasa mabuti kang kamay

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Northern Luzon will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and isolated thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to cloudy with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms.

SOURCE: PAGASA

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	HI34° Lo 24°
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	HI 26° Lo 15°
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	HI 35° Lo 26°
Laoag	Cloudy with Rains	HI 33° Lo 24°
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	HI 34° Lo 24°
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	HI 31° Lo 21°
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	HI 33° Lo 25°
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	HI 32° Lo 23°
Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy	HI 33° Lo 25°
Roxas	Partly Cloudy	HI 32° Lo 27°
Cebu	Partly Cloudy	HI 34° Lo 26°
Tacloban	Partly Cloudy	HI 32° Lo 25°
Gen. Santos	Partly Cloudy	HI 35° Lo 25°
Zamboanga	Partly Cloudy	HI 34° Lo 26°
Cagayan de Oro	Partly Cloudy	HI 33° Lo 23°
Davao	Partly Cloudy	HI 34° Lo 25°

Compiled by: Ray Leyesa, PDI Research/04/16/02

ROUNDUP

Woman electrocuted

PARANG, Maguindanao—An 80-year-old woman was electrocuted while another was injured here on Saturday. Town Councilor Dodong Teves said the victims–Hadja Sainar Diron, 80, and Mali Dimalaw, 70–were hanging their laundry on a cable attached to an electric post to dry. The two women suffered serious burns, Teves said.

Edwin Fernandez, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Pentagon men regroup

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—The Sultan Kudarat police vowed to wipe out remnants of the Pentagon kidnap gang operating in the province. Supt. Abubakar Mangelen, provincial police chief, said he had received reports that members of the gang were regrouping in Lambayong town. The group, composed of about 30 men, is now being led by a certain Commander Rizal Kitango, aide of captured Pentagon leader Faizal Marohombsar. Mangelen said Kitango's group were behind robberies, cattle rustling and extortion activities in Lambayong.

Aquiles Zonio, PDI Mindanao Bureau

No terrorists in Bicol?

LEGAZPI CITY—Chief Supt. Enrique Galang Jr., police regional director, has denied allegations that local terrorists have invaded the region and are in the city to create trouble. The allegations surfaced after two bombs were found in separate places in this city recently. Galang has directed the Legazpi police to increase its visibility in populated areas and business centers.

Tony Macasinag, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Couple nabbed for drugs

LEGAZPI CITY—Members of the Police Narcotics Group arrested a couple in a buy-bust operation in Barangay 34, this city, recently. Police identified those arrested as Amer and Erlinda Cadayon. Amer was caught in possession of one plastic sachet containing suspected shabu weighing 184 milligrams and worth about P500. Two plastic sachets containing the same substance and weighing 1,093 mg were recovered from Erlinda.

Tony Macasinag, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Fire chief shot dead

CABANATUAN CITY—A lone gunman shot and killed the chief of the Bureau of Fire Protection of San Leonardo, Nueva Ecija on Friday afternoon. Police said FO3 Francisco Jumaquio was waiting for a bus ride along the Maharlika Highway in San Leonardo when the gunman shot him at close range. Jumaquio died from six bullet wounds. Police said a man aboard a motorcycle picked up the gunman. The incident happened about 100 meters from the victim's office and the town police station.

Anselmo Roque, PDI Central Luzon Desk

Crash victims get P3,000

CABANATUAN CITY—President Macapagal-Arroyo on Thursday distributed checks worth P3,000 each to residents whose houses were damaged when a Philippine Air Force trainer jet crashed in Barangay M.S. Garcia here on Jan. 14. In a brief speech here, Ms Macapagal also promised to release P3 million for the victims or their families to enable them to rebuild their houses or finance livelihood activities. Forty-four residents received the checks, provided by the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office, from the President. Seven people died, 26 were hurt and several houses were burned when the plane burst into flames after hitting trees and houses in the village last Jan. 14.

Anselmo Roque, PDI Central Luzon Desk

Modern agri pushed

SCIENCE CITY OF MUÑOZ—President Macapagal-Arroyo has cited the critical need to improve the country's agriculture to solve poverty and for the country to cope with globalization. "In our fight against poverty, we need agricultural modernization that is based on social equity," Ms Macapagal said here during the 50th graduation program of the Central Luzon State University on Thursday. She said one of the steps needed to improve the plight of farmers is to equip them with knowledge and technology to help raise their productivity and efficiency.

Anselmo Roque, PDI Central Luzon Desk

120 families get power

HUNGDUAN, Ifugao—At least 120 families in two remote villages at the famous Ifugao rice terraces here will have access to electricity from a micro-hydroelectric plant built in the town this month. The plant, built in Sitio Howang, now generates five kilowatts of electricity to light up houses in Barangays Ba-ang and Nungullunan. The project was realized through the joint efforts of provincial and town officials, the Benguet State University-Annex and village officials. Gov. Teodoro Baguilat Jr. said the project was part of Ifugao's Rural Electrification Using Sustainable Energy (Re-use) program launched last year.

PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

LUZON WAR GAMES

New rules threaten to spoil R&R for GIs

By Tonette Orejas
PDI Central Luzon Desk

ANGELES CITY—Have you heard of rest and recreation (R & R) done in strict military discipline style?

American soldiers, as well as Filipino troops in the Balikatan 2002 that is set to start on April 22 in Luzon, are expected to unwind in this staid fashion, that is, if the Presidential Commission on the Visiting Forces Agreement, an inter-agency body monitoring the conduct of VFA-related war games, would have its way.

Jaime Yambao, VFACom executive director, announced that rule in a press conference here on Thursday.

"The VFACom expects the Balikatan 2002 to observe strict military discipline during the rest and recreation periods of the participants," he said, reading from a press statement.

Yambao is not playing naive to the realities of what goes on, for instance, on Fields Avenue, this city's red light district. Fields is just outside the perimeter of the Clark Special Economic Zone, one of Balikatan's four training sites.

Along this 3-km strip, women activists smirk at the phrase "rest and recreation," calling it a euphemism for prostitution. It has always been a social concern to both the commission and to leftist groups since VFA exercises resumed in 1999.

Yambao said he was instructed by President Macapagal-Arroyo not to allow prostitution to thrive via the joint military exercises.

When reporters began sharing to Yambao stories about American troops taking women to their hotel rooms, he went on to defend the visiting soldiers. About 2,000 American soldiers are expected to participate in the exercises, which will end on May 6.

He said it was "unfair to assume that the US troops are here just for that."

Yambao, who assumed the post only early this year, did not say how strict military discipline-styled R & R would be done. He only went as much as saying that the participants would be "as before, going out in groups within a designated perimeter to selected establishments with armed Philippine National Police providing force protection."

But hearing the R & R rule for the first time, commercial sex workers—the way the city government calls the men and women working in bars and on Fields Avenue—are laughing at the idea.

"What do they think of bars? Barracks? And we are not going to sit and stand stiff like military people do," Rachel, a bar dancer in her 20s, told the INQUIRER.

"We are here to entertain. We want the greenbacks," she added.

The deep obsession to earn dollars will take her to as far as allowing herself to be on a "bar fine," a scheme in which the customer pays both the nightclub owner and the woman for the sexual service she renders for the night.

"Bar fine," the evidence that prostitution exists, is prohibited by the city government.

"Women here don't earn by simply sitting and chatting with our customers," Rachel explained. "Drinks and sex bring in the money."

But to bar managers who have worked on Fields for more than three decades, things have not been pretty much the same.

Most of the visiting US soldiers in the last three years had not been rowdy.

And many had not spent much, according to Evelyn who had worked in bars in Angeles and Olongapo cities during the heydays of Clark and Subic Naval Base in Zambales.

"Some just drink and eat," she observed.

On food alone, Yambao said each American soldier has $16 (P816) to spend daily.

Evelyn noticed that the recent batches of US soldiers have been very discreet in "dating" the women. And she hesitated to talk about that either.

The fact, however, is that Fields Avenue often gives a rousing welcome to US soldiers.

Nightclubs, diners, sauna baths, karaoke bars, hotels, discos, hobby shops—numbering more than 200—undergo some facelift.

N. Samar faces same fate as Aklan over unpaid power bill

TACLOBAN CITY—The National Power Corp. has given the Northern Samar Electric Cooperative (Norsamelco) until the end of this month to pay at least P7.8 million in power bills or face disconnection.

But Ricardo Largo, Norsamelco manager, said his office might not be able to pay up because the electric cooperative does not have money.

The Norsamelco, he said, only relies on payment collected from its consumers. If its consumers failed to pay their bills on time, he added, the electric cooperative could not also pay its power bills to the Napocor.

It was learned that this was the third time that the Norsamelco received a warning from the Napocor for nonpayment of power bills. The first was in November last year and the second was last March.

Records at the Napocor showed that Norsamelco owes the Napocor P7.8 million in unpaid power bills for January and February.

Largo said the Norsamelco would be able to pay the Napocor only if its consumers would pay their bills on time.

He said that the cooperative could collect P20 million from many of its consumers who have not paid their power bills since October last year.

The cooperative is supplying power to most of the 24 towns in Northern Samar. Largo said only 15 percent of its 25,918 consumers pay their bills on time.

The Napocor's pass-on rate in Northern Samar is P4.36 per kilowatt-hour, plus P1.76 in power purchase adjustment.

The Napocor had cut off power supply to the Aklan Electric Cooperative, affecting about 58,000 residents of Aklan's 17 towns, including Malay where Boracay Island belongs, and two towns in Antique, for failing to pay P105 million in unpaid power bills for the past four months.

Electricity was restored at 5 p.m. on March 20 after a three-man management team from the NEA took over the Akelco operations.

If the Napocor decides to disconnect its power supply to Northern Samar, only the consumers are to be blamed, Largo said.

"I cannot do anything if Napocor will implement its plan to disconnect its supply to us. Most of the electric consumers here do not pay their monthly dues on time," he told the INQUIRER.

He said the majority of the consumers do not pay their bills on time. Government offices were among those that failed to settle their accounts with the Norsamelco.

Largo, however, refused to divulge the names of their delinquent consumers.

He said there were instances when the consumers harassed the cooperative's bill collectors.

One time, he said, a collector went to a house to demand payment. But the collector was met instead by a German Shepherd. ***Cynthia Borgueta, PDI Visayas Bureau***

Science City's newest test tube carabao named after GMA

By Anselmo Roque
PDI Central Luzon Desk

SCIENCE CITY OF MUÑOZ—Meet "Glory," the country's latest test tube carabao whose embryo was developed in a laboratory in India.

The female carabao, weighing 44 kilograms at birth, was born on April 5, incidentally the 55th birthday of President Macapagal-Arroyo, at the Philippine Carabao Center national gene pool here.

Officials of the PCC said they named the carabao "Glory" because its birth ushered in a "glorious" moment in the PCC's research program.

Dr. Libertado Cruz, executive director of the PCC inside the campus of the Central Luzon State University, said Glory's birth "gave glory to the scientists who developed the technique that led to her birth."

He said the name "Glory" was also in recognition of the fact that the carabao was born on the birthday of Ms Macapagal, whose first name is Gloria.

Cruz said "Glory" weighed 11 kg more than the 33-kg average weight of carabao calves born in the country.

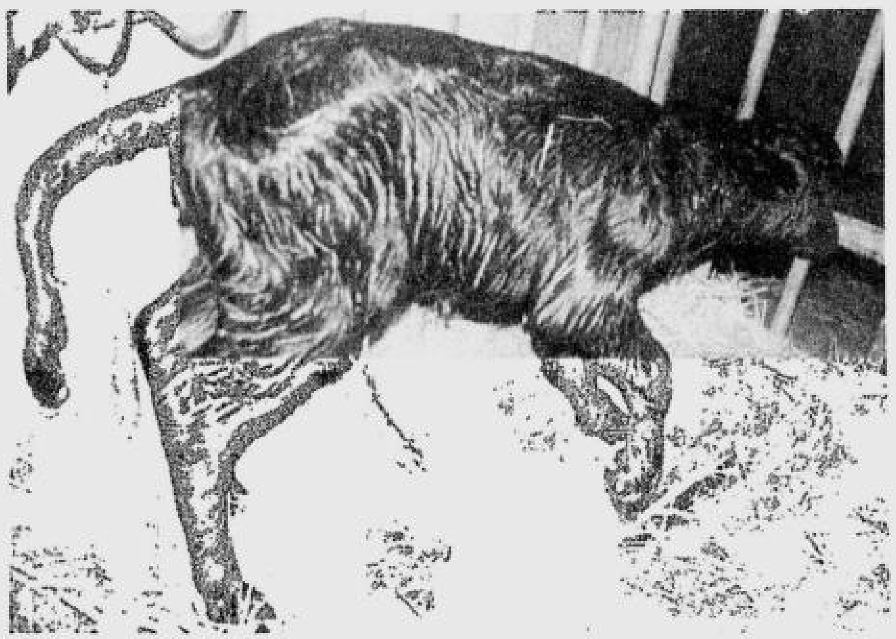
"Glory promises to be a top of the line dairy animal capable of producing milk at 4,422 liters per lactation or an average of 14.74 liters a day," he said.

She is also the first riverine buffalo calf in the world developed through a process called "vitrified-thawed in vitro produced embryo."

In this process, according to Cruz, the embryo was developed in the laboratory of a PCC satellite station in India and was subjected to ultra rapid cooling by vitrification method.

Vitrification, Cruz explained, is a simplified method of freezing embryos without the need for sophisticated and expensive equipment.

After the embryo was flown into the country, it was thawed and then transferred to a surrogate mother carabao.



GLORY, test tube carabao named after President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.
BEN MOSES EBREO

Cruz said it was the first time that such procedure was done in the world in reproductive biotechnology for water buffalo and probably other animals.

"Glory" became the toast of scientists here as her arrival was keenly awaited. She affirmed the perfection of a new reproductive biotechnique that is more advanced than the one used for the development of "Maganda," the first test tube carabao in Southeast Asia.

"Maganda," born on Oct. 28, 1996 and called in jest the "tubeless carabao" by then President Joseph Estrada, originated from fresh in vitro (outside of the body) embryo transferred through the use of a transfer gun.

The fresh in-vitro should be transferred to a surrogate mother carabao within two hours or it will die, Cruz said.

In the new technique used for the development of "Glory," the embryo can be stored for an indefinite time without losing its viability. The embryo is as big as the tip of a strand of hair and placed in plastic straws. It is kept in a nitrogen thermos bottle whose temperature is minus 190 degrees Celsius.

Cruz said for the new process, which is part of the project called "Production of high genetics water buffaloes through the use of reproductive biotechniques," a PCC satellite embryo biotechnology station was set up in Aurangabad, India.

He said Frigorifico Allana Ltd. (FAL), one of the major meat exporters of India, helped the PCC in the project.

FAL slaughters more than 1,000 water buffaloes a day. The ovaries of the slaughtered female buffaloes, which contained genetic materials (the oocytes or immature and unfertilized eggs), are harnessed in the project, Cruz said.

He added that the eggs were matured in the laboratory and fertilized in-vitro with the best semen of selected bulls in India.

"The embryos produced are of very high genetic quality," he said.

"Glory," Cruz said, is a pure Murrah buffalo calf from the egg of a female Murrah buffalo and the sperm cell of top bulls from India.

He said "Glory" had a higher genetic value and would be a very valuable resource for improving milk and meat production.

He said the team in India—composed of Danilda Duran, Dr. Prudencio Pedro and Rogelio Hufana—brought home hundreds of frozen embryos and many had been transferred to surrogate mother carabaos in the country.

Many more "Glorys" are expected to be born soon, Cruz said.

The project is supported by the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Science and Technology and the Philippine Council for Agriculture, Forestry and Natural Resources Research and Development (PCARRD), with the cooperation of the National Dairy Development Board of India.

Several thousands of cryo-preserved embryos are expected to be brought to the Philippines by the team soon.

Cruz gave assurance that the technique used in developing "Glory" was a fast way of producing quality carabaos in the country.

This technique, he said, had a very high rate of success compared to artificial insemination and natural mating.

He said this technology would do away with the transport of live animals, which is very risky and expensive.

The cost of imported high quality buffaloes, it was learned, is estimated at P130,000 each.

Developing water buffalo embryos in India under the PCC technique is estimated to cost only P2,300 per embryo, PCC officials said.

Pangasinan fish cages ordered dismantled

BOLINAO, Pangasinan—The Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources has asked officials in four towns in the province to dismantle fish traps and other fishery structures that impede the flow of water toward here.

The BFAR gave the order to hasten the cleansing of the town's polluted sea.

BFAR Director Malcolm Sarmiento on Saturday met with local government representatives from the towns of Bani, Anda, Alaminos and Bolinao to devise a plan of action on the demolition of structures that block not only the tide's flow but also navigational routes.

Sarmiento said if the concerned local governments would not order the demolition of the structures, Agriculture Secretary Leonardo Montemayor will carry it out.

Sarmiento inspected the length of the Tambac Bay in Alaminos leading to the Kakiputan Channel in Bolinao and Anda after a fish kill recurred in Bolinao recently. He said he found 156 fish structures in the area.

The recent fish kill had affected cultured *bangus* kept in cages and coral fishes like *sapsap* (slipmouth), *barangen* (rabbit fish), *malaga* and *bolasi* (mullet) in Bolinao and parts of Anda. In February, a massive fish kill hit Bolinao, resulting in losses worth P600 million to the aquaculture industry.

Sarmiento said that because of the fishery structures in the rivers, water could not freely flow into the sea and prevent pollutants from being washed out.

The pollutants, mostly uneaten fish feed that have accumulated at the sea bottom, are among the causes of fish kills.

Sarmiento said he was assured by local officials that they will cooperate with the clearing of the waterways "because they have realized that if we will not do this, the fish kill will be a recurring problem."

A soil and water test conducted by the BFAR research center in Dagupan City showed that the level of hydrogen sulfide, a toxic gas, was still high in the aquaculture areas in Bolinao.

The BFAR has cautioned aquaculture operators not to re-stock their cages because the high level of hydrogen sulfide can cause another fish kill.

Despite the warning, many operators stocked their cages, but most of these newly stocked *bangus* floated dead.

Hydrogen sulfide is a toxic gas produced by anaerobic bacteria present in the soil. In Bolinao, it was caused by amino acids in the uneaten fish feed that settled at the sea bottom.

"The excess feed, dead planktons and *bangus* wastes combined to make a suitable breeding ground for anaerobic bacteria that produced hydrogen sulfide," said Westly Rosario, chief of the BFAR research center. ***Yolanda Fuertes, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau***

Vice mayor held by cultists freed

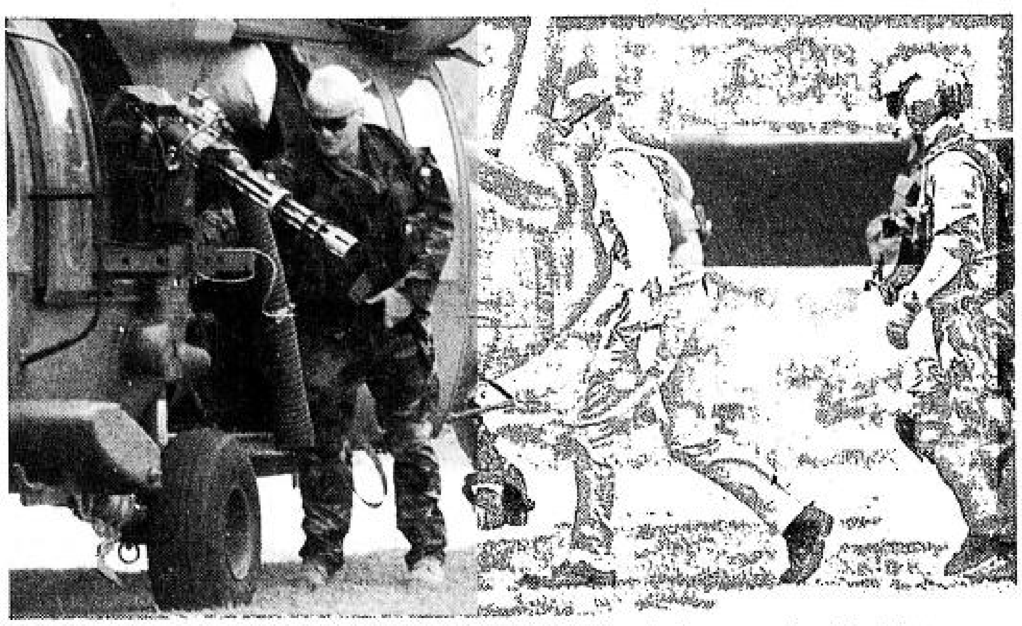
CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY—Suspected members of the anti-communist Tadtad cult abducted the vice mayor of Jasaan town in Misamis Oriental on Sunday night.

Gov. Antonio Calingin said they were still trying to find the kidnappers and negotiate for the release of Vice Mayor Juan Po. Po was freed from his captors several hours after he was seized.

Po, 73, was snatched from his farmhouse in Barangay Magaod in Claveria town at around 8 p.m. Sunday.

The seven suspects, allegedly members of the Sagrado Corazon Jesus, were led by Ferdinand Acosta alias Datu Macabali. ***Butch Enerio and Grace Albasin, PDI Mindanao Bureau***

Macapagal supports extending US presence



UNDER tight security, Admiral Blair takes a Black Hawk chopper after his visit to Isabela, Basilan. REUTERS

WELCOMING party for Admiral Blair and US Ambassador Ricciardone is headed by AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Diomedio Villanueva and Southcom chief, Lt. Gen. Roy Cimatu. DONDEE DONDOYANO

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scheduled today but it was not certain that Blair or Ricciardone would be present.

Adm. Tomas Fargo is scheduled to replace Blair as commander in chief of the US Pacific Command on May 2.

A total of 660 American troops, including 160 from the US Special Forces, have been deployed in Southern Philippines since January. They are there officially to help train Filipino troops stamp out the Abu Sayyaf, which the US government has linked to Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida network.

"We are doing our best to rescue all the hostages," said Lt. Gen. Roy Cimatu, chief of the Southern Command. "Our troops are on their toes to get the hostages from the Abu Sayyaf and neutralize the local terrorists."

Col. Renato Miranda, commander of the 2nd Marine Brigade, confirmed that the Abu Sayyaf had divided into two groups.

"(Abu) Sabaya and Isnilon Hapilon are holding Martin Burnham," Miranda said, adding that Gracia Burnham and Filipino nurse Ediborah Yap were with Hamsiraji Sali and Bakkal Hapilon.

Miranda said the hostages were still being held in Basilan, contrary to earlier reports.

But Sulu provincial board member Edil Baddiri said some members of the bandit group fled to Sulu when the Balikatan exercises started in February.

Quoting reports from local residents, Baddiri said some 200 bandits and a Caucasian were seen docking in Patikul.

"(It could have been) Martin Burnham, (but) we still have to verify this report," he said.

Southcom spokesperson Maj. Noel Detoyato said 18 Abu Sayyaf bandits surrendered Sunday to the Philippine Marines in the coastal town of Maluso on Basilan, and turned over an assortment of weapons including M-16 rifles and pistols.

"They said they can no longer get to supplies and they are feeling the military heat," he said. "They feel isolated with so many military there."

Detoyato said the 18 bandits were involved in providing supplies to their colleagues holding Yap and the Burnhams.

The bandits were transported under heavy guard to Zamboanga, where they were being interrogated. Detoyato said he expected them to be formally charged today. ***Reports from Dona Pazzibugan in Manila; Julie S. Alipala, PDI Mindanao Bureau; AP***

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Tuesday, April 16, 2002
3rd Week of Easter

1st Reading: **Acts 7:51—8:1**
Gospel: **Jn 6:30-35**

The people said to Jesus, "Show us miraculous signs, that we may see and believe you. What sign do you perform? Our ancestors ate manna in the desert; as Scripture says: *They were given bread from heaven to eat.*"

Jesus then said to them, "Truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the *bread from heaven.* My Father gives you the true *bread from heaven.* The bread God gives is the One who comes from heaven and gives life to the world." And they said to him, "Give us this bread always."

Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall never be hungry, and whoever believes in me shall never be thirsty."

Commentary

Risen Lord, are you really a new Moses, leading your people across the sea, from slavery to a new life of freedom? Moses gave us bread from heaven, the manna God provided in the desert. And you? What do you give us?

I have no gimmicks, no sweet and miraculous food. What I have to give is myself, my presence with you on the journey. Many of our co- travelers are hungry and thirsty. Give them something to eat yourselves. I too am hungry and thirsty—I thirst to fulfil the purpose for which I came into the world, to walk with you, to let you find me in every person, creature and circumstance, sacraments of God-with-you. It's a journey that will take us, through suffering, sacrifice and love, to new life united with each other and with God. Will you journey with me?

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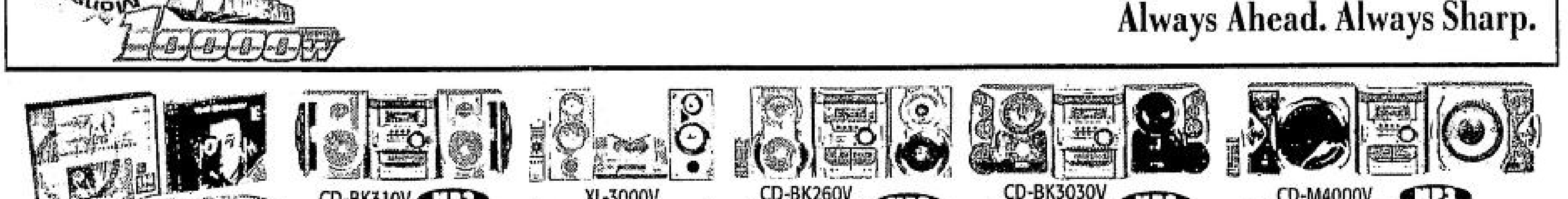

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GMA private publicist out in the open

From page A1

public relations.

What appeared to be Tiglao's sudden decision to pursue a fellowship at the Kyoto University in Japan, which was announced only last Thursday, was widely interpreted as the result of the turf war among the President's media and public relations people, particularly Tiglao and Ang.

The President's private publicist since 1993, Ang walked tall in the corridors of power and allegedly meddled in Tiglao's job.

Ms Macapagal denied any conflict between Tiglao and Ang during her weekly radio interview yesterday.

She said that the two men always consulted with each other and had differed in only one instance: the airing of Ms Macapagal's "Ina ng Bayan" television address. The Ina ng Bayan spiel was Ang's brainchild.

The President also recalled that it was Ang who recommended Tiglao's appointment as her spokesperson.

Negative image

Ironically, Ang, the image-polishing expert, is having trouble with his own image.

For one whose name has been regarded as synonymous to hush-hush backroom operations, Ang is glad to assume what he called a "formal title."

"I welcome the appointment if only to obviate the bad impression of me," Ang said in a phone interview, a few hours after the President announced his appointment.

"My being a publicist of President Macapagal in a private capacity has contributed largely to what we may call as my negative image," Ang said. "They say I have authority but no accountability and that's the reason the President 'formalized' it."

In his first press briefing, Secretary Silvestre Afable, who was designated officer in charge during Tiglao's absence, said he wasn't aware of Ms Macapagal's plan to appoint Ang.

"I don't know the details," Afable also said when asked what Ang's specific functions will be.

In answer to a reporter's query, Afable said that polishing the personal image of the President "is different from the mainstream objectives of the Office of the Press Secretary."

Asked who is in charge of enhancing Ms Macapagal's image, Afable said: "The President takes care of her own image."

Exactly Ang's turf.

THE PRESIDENT and her personal publicist, Dante Ang, shown here during a break in a live telecast from Baguio on the President's year-end economic report EDWIN BACASMAS

Mass appeal

Ang came on board the Macapagal bandwagon a year after her election to the Senate in 1993. But she did not exactly make an impressive showing at the polls.

"But in the 1995 elections, she was already No. 1. That was partly due to our repackaging of her image so that she would have the '*masa*' appeal," Ang admitted with pride.

Another of Ang's pride is that he does not receive compensation from Ms Macapagal.

"The President first wanted me to become a presidential adviser, which is equivalent to a Cabinet rank. But this comes with a salary and so I preferred to be just a consultant with a P1 a year pay," Ang said.

But he has been compensated in other ways.

Ang is the publisher of the Manila Times and chair of the board of the government-sequestered RPN-9 television channel. He was on the board of the government's cash-rich Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. (Pagcor). He quit in September due to mounting criticisms of his cushy positions in several state-run corporations.

The People's Consultative Assembly claimed that Ang "controls" other government agencies such as the Philippine Broadcasting Service, the National Broadcasting Network (formerly PTV-4) and the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes.

Because of his huge clout behind the media scene, some quarters describe him as the "Kokoy Romualdez of the Macapagal administration," a reference to Imelda Marcos' younger brother Benjamin Romualdez who published the now defunct Times Journal and reportedly handled special media operations for the Marcos regime.

Starting out as a radio talent, Ang shifted to public relations during the late '80s counting the late House Speaker Ramon Mitra among his first clients.

Today, Ang's prized client, Ms Macapagal, has herself sought to clean up his "shadowy" image.

"In order to clarify matters, I'm planning to make Ang 'official' as my senior consultant for public relations," Ms Macapagal said.

On Tiglao's recommendation, she also appointed Claro Fernandez and Ricky Alfonso as press assistant secretaries for broadcast and legislative affairs, respectively.

Arafat to Powell: No way without Israeli pullout

From page A1

Powell's "clear message" to Arafat in a 45-minute presentation was "the bombings have to stop; that it was a major barrier" to progress toward a security agreement or on negotiations that Powell has said should lead to establishment of a Palestinian state. Earlier, Sharon had called the meeting a "tragic mistake."

Powell and Arafat directed top aides to meet Monday on "a variety of ideas," but none of the officials provided details. Arafat and Powell are expected to meet again today.

Peace conference without Arafat

After the meeting, Powell shuttled to Tel Aviv later on Sunday to press Sharon for a complete pullback, a US official said.

Sharon renewed his proposal for an international peace conference among Israel and Arab states including Saudi Arabia, Syria and Lebanon and the Palestinians—but not including Arafat.

Sharon said the United States would lead the conference, and "I imagine that within a short time a conference of this sort will convene to debate the diplomatic arrangements in the Middle East."

Erekat said the proposal was an attempt to "turn the clock backward," but Arafat expressed conditional acceptance of the idea. In a phone call to Fox News, he said, "I am ready for immediate conference, but at the same time immediate withdrawal of Israeli forces."

A senior US official said the idea was discussed as part of a way to move forward politically, but more talks were needed. Without Arafat's participation, however, there was little chance such a meeting would take place.

Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres welcomed the idea. He said "a regional conference will formulate a clear political horizon and a program for economic recovery of the (Palestinian) territories," according to the statement from his office.

Sharon and his Security Cabinet discussed unilateral measures to protect Israel from Palestinian attackers, discussing plans to build barriers between the West Bank and Israel. But the Israelis took pains to say they were "not talking about a continuous fence, but about different types of obstacles at different places," said Cabinet Secretary Gideon Saar.

The ceasefire line between Israel and the West Bank has never been fortified, as Israeli governments do not recognize it as a border.

Security nightmare

The meeting between Powell and Arafat, which US officials described as a "security nightmare," took place in Arafat's war-damaged headquarters.

With the water cut off, the toilets backed up and the building raked with tank and machine-gun fire, the building was an unusual venue for quiet diplomacy.

Powell's motorcade of armored SUVs drove through largely empty streets. With a strict Israeli curfew in force, no Palestinians braved the streets.

About a dozen Israeli troops and two tanks could be seen as Powell pulled up. Erakat led him past groups of Palestinian fighters, armed to the teeth and dressed in military fatigues.

Together they walked past hastily erected barricades of broken furniture, shopping carts and bags overflowing with trash which had been put in the vestibule in anticipation of an Israeli assault on the building, an ever-present threat.

Powell went up the stairs to meet Arafat, who was wearing his traditional uniform, keffiyah head scarf and black-framed glasses, and showing signs of the stress induced by the 16-day siege under the eyes of Israeli snipers and tank gunners.

Neither spoke a word as they met, flanked by aides.

They went into a second-floor dining room where, sitting on opposite sides of a large wooden table, Powell held his first talks with Arafat since a session in November outside the UN General Assembly in New York.

As the meeting was about to begin, Arafat removed his glasses and pressed his eyes in an apparent sign of fatigue.

Palestinians said that the Israeli army inspected and tidied up around Arafat's headquarters ahead of Sunday's visit. They had also restored electricity to the building, whose supply of power, food and water depends on the decision of the Israelis.

The deputy director of the Palestinian health minister told reporters that Arafat was under severe strain but was in good health nonetheless.

"His physical condition is tense but he's feeling good," said Dr Zayid Abu Shawish. "Of course he's under unusual pressure for an old man like him but I hope he'll pass (through) this situation."

He said the problem was a lack of supplies, especially water, and that many people were suffering in the besieged building from diarrhea.

Shawish added that he had set up a makeshift clinic in one of the rooms for six people he said had been wounded in the fighting. One of the men was hit by shrapnel in the back and was left a paraplegic, he said.

Reporters were denied access to the rest of the building by armed guards.

During Powell's visit, periodic explosions echoed through Ramallah, part of the ongoing Israeli operation that involved blowing doors off a cell phone company and other office buildings in order to conduct searches.

As the talks were underway, a group of around 40 international demonstrators who had broken past Israeli troops at the start of the siege and joined Arafat in his offices, held banners out of the window saying "End the occupation" and "Protection Now." ***With reports from AP and AFP***

AN Israeli soldier runs past demolished houses in the Jenin refugee camp where the fiercest fighting erupted between the Israeli army and Palestinian guerrillas. GETTY IMAGES

Old Palestinian couple survive a week in rubble

NABLUS, West Bank—As fighting raged in the streets of this West Bank city, an Israeli army bulldozer moved in and demolished an apartment, causing it to crash down on a second one next door, where Abdallah and Shams Shobi lived with their extended family.

The collapsing building killed eight members of the Shobi family, and left Abdallah, 68, and Shams, 65, trapped in a darkened, rubble-filled room on the ground floor with only one bottle of water between them.

They could move around within the room, but were stuck for a week without light or fresh air, and did not know the fate of their relatives. They frequently lost track of their water bottle in the darkness, and after four days, the water ran out.

On Friday morning, after being entombed for a week, they thought they would never make it out alive, Abdallah said.

"There was no fresh air, it was hard to breathe and I realized we were going to die. I told my wife to prepare to die," he said, adding that they began to pray.

Then on Friday afternoon, the couple heard knocking on the ceiling as Palestinian rescue workers were removing the rubble. Rescuers kissed both and onlookers cheered as the pair emerged from the pile of fractured concrete and dust. Both were suffering from severe dehydration and initially had trouble breathing. ***AP***

Israeli terms . . .

From page A1

"Our options are to die or to return safely to our homes." Hussein said the Palestinians would abide by any decision made by Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat.

For the second straight Sunday, no services were held at the church, the site traditionally regarded by Christian believers as the birthplace of Jesus Christ.

Israeli tanks and armored personnel carriers continued to surround the church compound, with snipers in place and a surveillance blimp with cameras providing a view of the grounds below.

In Vatican City, Pope John Paul II said Sunday he was entrusting to God "those suffering in the Holy Land, from where appeals from all sides are reaching me."

"To everyone I assure my spiritual and human solidarity, while I invite prayers so that the efforts under way to reestablish respect for people and property and to favor the advent of a just and lasting peace are crowned with success," said the Pope, who did not specifically mention Bethlehem or US Secretary of State Colin Powell's visit to the Middle East.

The latest Israeli proposal comes after a Palestinian was shot dead Saturday in a hostel adjoining the church. Israeli soldiers briefly entered the hostel in the church compound and fired several shots, hitting Hassan Nasmam, a Palestinian civilian, in the neck and killing him, said a Palestinian policeman who gave his name only as Abu Marwan.

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon raised the latest Israeli proposal with Powell, who was to pass it on to the Palestinian leadership, said Sharon spokesperson Raanan Gissin. It wasn't clear to where the gunmen would be exiled.

"We want to resolve the standoff at the Church of the Nativity, but we're not going to let the terrorists just walk away," Gissin said.

Palestinian gunmen shot off the church door and entered on April 1 as they were being pursued by Israeli forces chasing suspected Palestinian militants. About 250 people are inside the church, including gunmen, Palestinian policemen and clergy.

The armed Palestinians in the church appealed to Powell, seeking his intervention in the standoff, and also have sought help from UN Secretary General Kofi Annan and Pope John Paul II.

In the meeting with Powell, the clergy on Saturday proposed that Israeli troops leave this West Bank town for three days and allow about 200 armed Palestinians inside the holy site to put down their weapons and go home. Israel rejected the proposal. ***AP***

Israeli High Court tells army to hand over Palestinian dead

JENIN REFUGEE CAMP, West Bank—Israel's Supreme Court told the Israeli army the other day it must turn over to the Palestinians the bodies of those killed here, a refugee camp it has attacked. The ruling could help clear up the escalating dispute over how many Palestinians have died in the fierce fighting.

The Israeli army says the Palestinians killed number about a hundred, although less than 40 bodies have been recovered. But Palestinians say the total death toll is in the hundreds, with many civilians among the dead.

The court also ordered the army to include workers from the Red Cross in teams searching for the bodies following more than a week of battles in the camp, the site of the heaviest combat since Israeli troops launched a West Bank offensive on March 29 to track militants responsible for attacks on its civilians.

The court decision comes amid Palestinian accusations that Israel has been secretly burying Palestinians in mass graves. The petition was filed by Arab Israelis who said Israel was attempting to hide the number of dead.

It has been impossible to confirm the death toll. Palestinians officials and medical groups have not been allowed into the camp. The army, which lost 23 soldiers, said about a hundred Palestinians were killed, most of them gunmen, and that it wanted to bury the militants in unmarked graves in a cemetery in northern Israel.

The army on Sunday gave a group of journalists a tour of part of the camp, which was home to some 15,000 Palestinians.

The powerful stench of sewage mixed with garbage strewn on the camp's narrow alleyways. Many houses were empty, some with their front doors open.

Bullet casings littered the streets and alleyways, sitting in the midst of shattered glass and shards of rubble. Walls bore Hebrew letters and numbers, the work of the Israeli army to mark the roads. Alongside were slogans of the militant Islamic group Hamas.

Some homes had their windows shut, but the sound of children playing and the aroma of baking bread wafted through, indicating that some people were still around.

Most residents who have remained inside the camp were too afraid to venture out.

But Mariam Fayed and the remaining five members of her family came out Sunday to survey the devastation. She said men in her family had left the camp before the Israeli army moved in.

For 10 days, the family survived on meager portions of bread and rice, said Fayed, displaying a pot of chopped greens from her garden and mixed with fried onions.

"We heard they lifted the curfew, but the last time they said that one of our neighbors went out to buy food and the soldiers shot at him," she said.

At one spot, a strong stench filled the air near the corpse of a man in a blue jacket and with a burnt face. The front of his house was missing, and a chicken wandered around the corpse.

Nearby, an elderly woman peered anxiously from behind a white curtain. "My goats are gone," she shouted. "I'm starving. Give me bread."

Elsewhere in the camp, entire floors of apartment blocs had tumbled, with the few walls left standing pockmarked with shell and bullet holes.

A group of Israeli soldiers patrolling the camp on foot and with two sniffer dogs later stopped a group of journalists touring the camp on their own and asked them to leave. On the tour organized by the army, journalists were told that Palestinian militants booby-trapped everything in the camp from rifles to garbage bags to refrigerators. The Israeli troops fighting them "window to window" and "house to house" could only advance about 100 yards a day.

So fierce was the fighting that the camp's central square has been reduced to a vast mass of rubble, dust and dirt. Most of the rest of the camp was not much different, resembling a town in the wake of a devastating earthquake.

Col. Yoram Lavie, commander of the army's main battalion in the camp, said Palestinian resistance had ceased entirely on Saturday, but he suspected some Palestinian gunmen were still hiding. ***AP***

Unknown virus . . .

From page A1

ing cocks and horses as well as birds, dogs and ducks.

The children fell ill a day after 15 ducks were found dead floating in a dirty pond inside the compound on April 6. Five dogs were also found dead that day.

The incident was kept secret until Sunday when personnel from the City Health Office (CHO) started fumigating the entire compound.

Doctors suspected the children were infected by a rare virus called West Nile. City veterinarian Adrian Veloso said there is no known vaccine or antibiotic that will fight the virus.

But Veloso said they could not yet confirm if the children were indeed afflicted by the rare virus because the laboratory testing was still being conducted.

He, however, said the children exhibited symptoms that would tend to show that the sickness was caused by the West Nile virus.

Veloso said these symptoms include high fever, sore eyes and tonsillitis. He said the patient would later develop inflammation of the brain.

"The virus can only be transmitted to humans and other animals by culex mosquitoes that have bitten the carrier or feasted on its wastes," he said.

The common carriers are wild birds, horses and cattle. The culex mosquito is the common mosquito that bites at night.

Veloso said a team from the Department of Health, which would include epidemiologists, was expected to arrive today to conduct a thorough investigation of the cause of the illness.

He said the entire Barangay Bantigue would also be fumigated to stop the spread of mosquitoes and prevent the spread of the virus.

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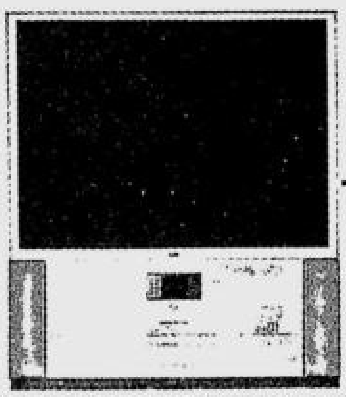
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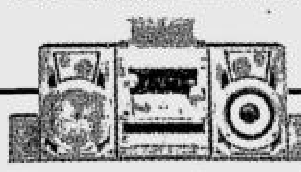
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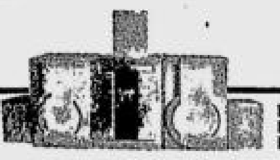
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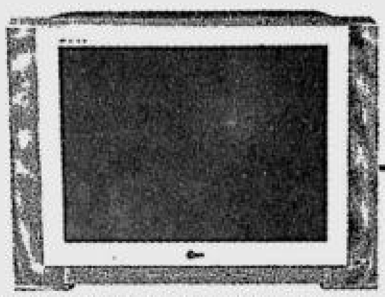
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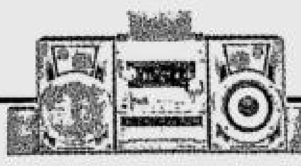
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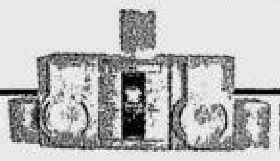
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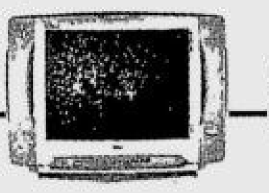
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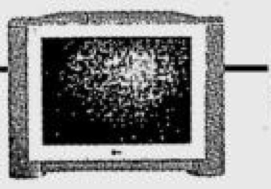
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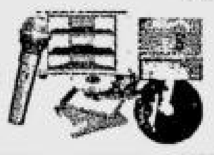
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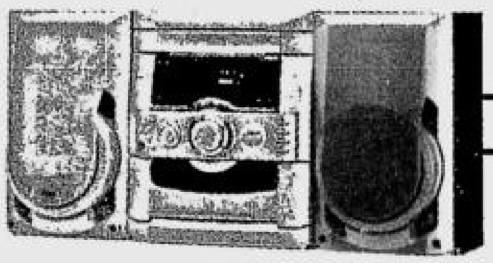
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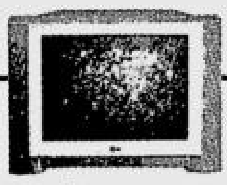
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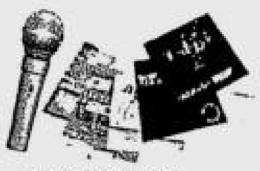
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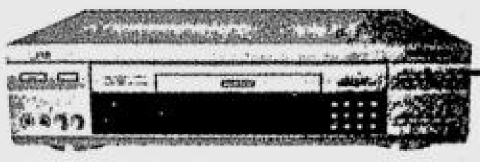
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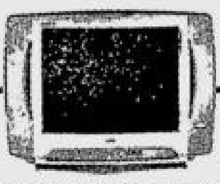
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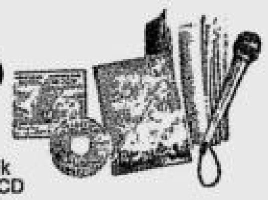
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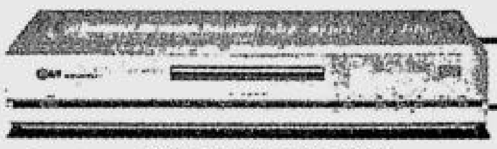
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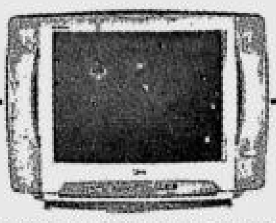
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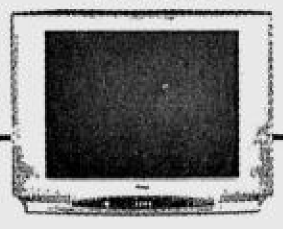
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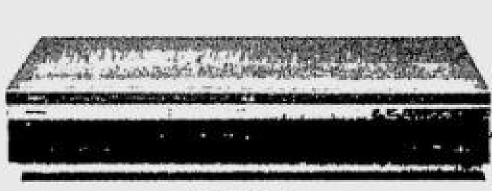
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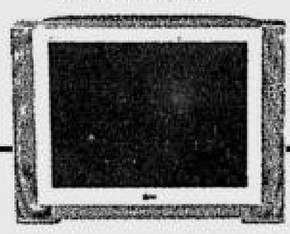
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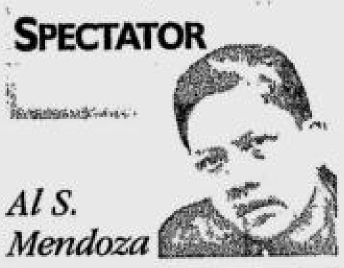
Woods wins 3rd Masters title since 1997

Cradled by greatness



SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

WITH Tiger Woods, you don't run out of topics to talk about, write about. That's the way with men cradled by greatness. He is not yet 30 and yet, Tiger is already widely regarded a golf icon.

That he won his third US Masters yesterday was no surprise. Seemingly, he is destined to win the big ones. Was he the only one present when God distributed His latest round of blessings to mankind?

I remember once more what Jack Nicklaus said the first time Tiger won the US Masters: "Watch this kid. He is going to break all records in golf."

Instantly, I bought that. For it came from the man known as the greatest golfer of all time.

That was 1997, when Tiger, at 21, became the youngest winner of the world's most prestigious tournament.

In a span of five years, Tiger has added to his three US Masters the three other majors: the British Open, US Open and PGA.

Along the way, he has accomplished numerous records. One was to own all four majors at the same time (2001).

His victory yesterday made him only the third man to win it back-to-back in 66 editions of the US Masters. Nicklaus did it first in 1965-66 and Nick Faldo duplicated that in 1989-90.

Of Tiger's first 10 stints in the majors, he has won 6. That's not something to sneeze at.

With his 6 majors, Tiger's behind by 12 to Nicklaus, who owns a record 18.

But then, at the rate Tiger's going, and barring any unforeseen event, he can surpass Nicklaus' record in no time. At 26, he has become a virtual wrecking crew. Almost already unbeatable.

But still, many of his peers—even Nicklaus himself—believe Tiger hasn't reached his peak. Scary. That means that while he is exceptionally good now, he can only get better.

If he can win 6 majors in barely 5 years, think of the things he can possibly do in the next 10 years. Ten years from now, he will only be 36. Most great golfers only start peaking at that age.

Tiger, in case you still don't know, was raised to become a golfer by his loving parents, Earl and Kultilda Woods. Earl, a two-time Green Beret in the Vietnam War, taught Tiger to swing a golf club at about the same time he learned to walk. Tiger played the Navy course in Alamitos, California, while still in diapers. A child prodigy, Tiger, at age 3, proclaimed on national television that he would one day beat Jack Nicklaus.

He seemed destined to achieve that. Already, Tiger has become the first three-time winner of the US Amateur championship.

Tiger's short of 12 majors to tie Nicklaus' mark. At age 26, Tiger's got a good 15-20 more years of good golf in him.

Shakespeare said: "Be not afraid of greatness: some men are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon them."

Woe to Tiger's foes. He was born great.

AUGUSTA, Georgia—Tiger Woods made short work of the Masters golf tournament's longest course ever Sunday, and had an even easier time against a collection of top-ranked players who scrambled for the sidelines as he became only the third player to win back-to-back titles.

An early burst of birdies gave him control, and Woods never let anyone closer than two strokes the rest of the way. He closed with a 1-under 71 to claim a three-stroke victory over US Open champion Retief Goosen.

Woods and Jack Nicklaus are the only players to win a major four years in a row since the Masters began in 1934.

"After the front nine, I knew it was all over for me. I just tried really hard for second," Goosen said. "It is obviously difficult playing with Tiger."

Despite all the changes to the course, the scene was all too familiar.

Woods walking up the 18th fairway in a victory parade, tugging on the brim of his cap to acknowledge the applause. Give him the lead at Augusta—or just about any major—and just wait for everyone else to back down.

Woods looked to the sky and smiled when his 18-foot (5.4-meter) birdie putt just missed, but he tapped in for par and walked over to hug his parents.

He finished at 276 and won a green jacket for the third time in six years. He became the first player to repeat as Masters champion since Nick Faldo in 1990. Jack Nicklaus was the only other, in 1965-66, and Woods' victory put him halfway to Nicklaus' mark of six Masters.

Last year, Woods battled Phil Mickelson and David Duval down the stretch to win the Masters and become the first player to sweep the four professional majors.

Another tight finish loomed, with six of the top seven players in the world all poised to win the Masters. By the end of the day, they were scratching their heads, trying to figure out what they could do–if anything–to tame Tiger.

"We were all trying to make something happen to catch Tiger, because we knew he wasn't going to falter," said Mickelson, who closed with a 71 to finish third, his 39th major and still regarded as the best to never win one.

Woods accepted his green jacket from Augusta National chairman Hootie Johnson—usually, that's the job of the defending champion.

"I think we're going to wear this jacket out putting it on you before your career is over," Johnson told Woods as he slipped it over his shoulders.

Johnson is the one who ordered the changes at Augusta, adding 285 yards (259 meters), stretching the bunkers and shifting the tees, all designed to make the Masters a tougher test.

Rain softened the course and allowed for lower scoring. Perhaps it was Woods' presence that turned so many top challengers into mush. *AP*

Final results

Tiger Woods	70-69-66-71-276
Retief Goosen	69-67-69-74-279
Phil Mickelson	69-72-68-71-280
J. Maria Olazabal	70-69-71-71-281
P. Harrington	69-70-72-71-282
Ernie Els	70-67-72-73-282
Vijay Singh	70-65-72-76-283
Sergio Garcia	68-71-70-75-284
Miguel A. Jimenez	70-71-74-70-285
Adam Scott	71-72-72-70-285
Angel Cabrera	68-71-73-73-285
Brad Faxon	71-75-69-71-286
Chris DiMarco	70-71-72-73-286
S. Maruyama	75-72-73-67-287
C. Montgomerie	75-71-70-71-287
Davis Love III	67-75-74-71-287
Nick Faldo	75-67-73-72-287
Thomas Bjorn	74-67-70-76-287
Paul McGinley	72-74-71-71-288
Justin Leonard	70-75-74-70-289
Jerry Kelly	72-74-71-72-289
Darren Clarke	70-74-73-72-289
Nick Price	70-76-70-73-289
Mark Brooks	74-72-71-73-290
Tom Pernice Jr.	74-72-71-73-290
Stewart Cink	74-70-72-74-290
Jeff Sluman	73-72-71-74-290
Mike Weir	72-71-71-76-290
Jesper Parnevik	70-72-77-72-291
Robert Allenby	73-70-76-72-291
Charles Howell III	74-73-71-73-291
Craig Stadler	73-72-76-71-292
Bernhard Langer	73-72-73-74-292
John Daly	74-73-70-75-292
Billy Mayfair	74-71-72-75-292
David Toms	73-74-76-71-294
Fred Couples	73-73-76-72-294
Rocco Mediate	75-68-77-74-294
Greg Norman	71-76-72-75-294
Tom Watson	71-76-76-72-295
Steve Lowery	75-71-76-73-295
Kirk Triplett	74-70-74-77-295
Scott Verplank	70-75-76-75-296
Lee Westwood	75-72-74-76-297
Bob Estes	73-72-75-78-298

AP

WOODS: Almost a no-sweat victory. AP

PSA scribes play today at Orchard

THE SECOND leg of the 2002 Philippine Sportswriters Association golf circuit tees off today at composite courses of the Orchard Golf and Country Club in Cavite.

The golfing members of the PSA will play both the Player and Palmer courses for the 18-hole event presented by Shell and supported by the Philippine Basketball Association and its member teams.

Shell executives led by Turbo Chargers' team manager Bobby Villarosa will play as guest in the tournament where attractive prizes in Classes A and B are at stake. Tee-off time is 7 a.m.

The circuit, which was launched last month with Purefoods sponsoring the first leg at the fabled Wack Wack East course, will culminate with the Grand Championship in December with Order of Merit winners in Classes A and B to be determined.

Tibayan Cup on

THE TIBAYAN Management Group Foundation Inc. and the Las Piñas Chamber of Commerce will hold the Tibayan Golf Cup today at Alabang. Leading the tee-off are Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry president Sergio Ortiz-Luis Jr., PCCI-NCR vice president Jesus Tanchangco Sr., LPCCI president Jesus V. Tibayan, UGC-Tibayan Group Ezekiel D. Martinez and PRCCI golf committee chair Edwin Afzelius Jr.

Elmo Bear Brand champ

BAGUIO City–The Bear Brand Kitefest 2002 reached the skies of the country's "Summer Capital" with elementary student Mark Joseph Costalles emerging as one of the winners in the seventh leg held at the Melvin Jones Field here recently.

Costalles' entry "Elmo" bagged first prize in the elementary flat kite category, beating Dave Amillao's "Ibon" and Gilmar Cajulao's "Low Bat."

Costalles brought home a cash prize of P4,000, trophy and gift pack from Nestle Philippines Inc., makers of Bear Brand Milk.

Anthony Mallari clinched the top award in the superkite category with his entry "Rainforest Giraffe", while Mark Joseph Balancio and Ronald Javier bagged top honors in the elementary and high school category of the "Sarangola ni Bear Brand" with their entries "Octopogi" and "Paru-parong Bukid," respectively.

The other winners were Ricky Agnote (high school flat kite), Thorems Manguera (college geometric kite), Eugene Mallari (college figure kite), Edgar Cano (adult geometric kite) and Isagani Cajulao (adult figure kite).

Agnote's "Cinderella" won in the high school flat kite category over Edward Mallari's Wilduck" and Jonnie Tomas' "Gordon."

New Balance race slated

THE COUNTRY'S top long distance runners can begin their chase for glory as registration for the New Balance-Race To Chicago 25K started yesterday.

The winner of the May 26 race will run in the La Salle Banks-Chicago Marathon later this year, the organizers, Alternative Events Group Inc. and Planet Sports, said.

Runners can submit their race entry forms and pay the entry fees at the New Balance Store in Filinvest Mall in Alabang, Muntinlupa, Planet Sports in Glorietta, Makati, and The Athlete's Foot at the Robinson's Place in Ermita, Manila.

To accommodate provincial entries, registration forms can be picked up at Planet Sports branches in Cebu, Iloilo, and Power Plant-Rockwell in Makati, and in Athlete's Foot stores in Baguio, Bacolod, and Davao, according to Nino Sinco of AEG Inc.

"This lead time should give runners enough time to prepare for the race. At the same time, they can use our New Balance 25K race as a training run for future full marathons," said Sinco.

The registration deadline will be on May 18, call Giovanni Tolentino at 0917-8380589, 0917-9862008, or 727-4806.

Dayrit: Hanoi OKs 21 sports for SEAG

HANOI, Vietnam—The Southeast Asian Games Federation Council has initially approved for inclusion in the 2003 SEA Games 21 of 24 sports disciplines recommended by host Vietnam.

This was reported yesterday by Philippine Olympic Committee president Celso L. Dayrit, who attended the council meeting held last Saturday at the Daewoo Hotel here.

These 21 priority sports are athletics, aquatics, badminton, basketball, bodybuilding, canoeing, cycling, football, gymnastics, handball, judo, karatedo, pencak silat, sepak takraw, shooting, table tennis, taekwondo, tennis, volleyball, wrestling and wushu.

However, the council deferred action on 15 other sports events. The council will decide on this during its meeting in October this year. The list includes chess, fin swimming and shuttlecock, three new sports recommended by Vietnam.

Seven other sports listed by the host country as acceptable for inclusion are archery, billiards and snooker, boxing, fencing, rowing, petanque and weightlifting.

Vietnam does not allow boxing to be practiced in its country, but local sports officials are willing to accommodate the sentiments of SEA Games member-countries.

Vietnam has expressed opposition to the inclusion of other sports, including five which were requested by SEAG member-countries. These are tenpin bowling, golf, squash, traditional boat races and yachting.

Sanvictores rules REAP tilt

ARCHIE Sanvictores scored a net 72 via the Blind Callaway System Friday to rule the Swing To R.E.A.P. tournament at Canlubang North.

Sanvictores, a 17 handicapper, toured the par 72, 6,349-yard (from the white tees) course with a gross 89 to take the title by one shot and win a championship trophy and a Tool and Tote set.

Noli Lopez netted a 73 to settle for second place in the event held to raise funds for 375 families in five Negros Occidental upland sitios and barangays.

Caloy Pena came up with a 74 to capture third place after beating Francisco "Toto" Bautista, Art Valdez and Bon Sandoval in the count back to break the tie.

A big field of 76 came to play in the 1 8-hole event organized by the Building Families Community Foundation in cooperation with the Bread From Heaven Christian Fellowship.

"I would like to thank all our sponsors for making this tournament a big success," said organizing committee chairman Jerome Buhion after the awards ceremony.

"And I would also like to express our gratitude to my fellow participants for coming to play in an event for a worthy cause," said tournament committee chairman Toto Bautista.

Fred and Glo Morales of TPG Zinergy and Ms. Mae Llanto were the major sponsors. Other big backers were Toyota Motor Philippines through Danny Isla, Jeffrey Choa of MicroGenesis, Mario and Joji Velasco and Shekinah Christian Training Center.

GTK invites Cito to Sering tribute

By Marc Anthony Reyes

PHILIPPINE Amateur Track and Field Association president Go Teng Kok yesterday asked Philippine Olympic Committee president Celso Dayrit to ceremonies honoring the late Gov. Jose Sering on May 3 coinciding with the Milo national open and invitational championships.

Go said Dayrit should play a big part in the tribute considering that he is the country's top sports leader and a protégé of the former POC president and track and field chief.

Dayrit has yet to reply.

"It is going to be a big bash in honor of Gov. Sering and everybody who has Philippine sports in their hearts must take part in the tribute," said Go, who also invited all national sports association presidents as well as officials of the Asian Amateur Athletes Association. Dayrit, just like Go, is among the current sports leaders who have been under the tutelage of Sering.

Go also asked officials of the Philippine Sports Commission to participate in the undertaking, particularly PSC chair Eric Buhain, who has reached his peak as an athlete during Sering's term as POC president in the early '90s.

The affair will be held at 7 p.m. at the Old Swiss Inn in Paco, Manila on the third day of the Nationals which is dubbed the Gov. Sering Memorial Cup.

HABIT

It's getting to be a habit for Michael Schumacher, winner of the Grand Prix of San Marino at the Imola racetrack in Italy on Sunday in the Formula 1. It was his third victory in four starts, beating his Ferrari teammate Rubens Barrichello. Williams-BMW's Ralf Schumacher, Michael's younger brother and the winner in Malaysia, placed third. AP

Williams survives Henin

AMELIA ISLAND, Florida —American Venus Williams overcoming fatigue and 60 unforced errors, rallied for a 2-6, 7-5, 7-6 (5) victory Sunday over Belgian Justine Henin to win the $585,000 Bausch & Lomb Championships.

Williams was down a set and four games before working her way back into the match. The title was her fourth this year, and 25th overall, boosting her career earnings past $9.8 million. *AP*

Big daddy of Asian athletics

CLEAN LIVING

Manolo R. Iñigo

THE LATE Gov. Jose Sering, the much-admired founding president of the Asian Amateur Athletics Association, will be honored by his peers on May 1-4 at the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex when the 4As board, headed by president Suresh Kalmadi of India, unanimously decided to name this year's national track and field meet the Gov. Jose C. Sering Memorial Cup.

"As the founding father of the 4As in 1973, Sering rallied sports leaders from around the region to play host to the first of what later became the biggest athletics spectacle this part of the world," said Go Teng Kok, the workaholic president of the Philippine Amateur Track and Field Association. "The 4As' recent gesture was in recognition of Sering's contribution not only to athletics but also to sports in Asia. He was respected by his friends and colleagues, including many of opponents in sports and politics, because he was always approachable, straightforward and renowned for his wit. He was also not a bad lawyer."

A former governor of Surigao del Norte (from 1965 to 1980), Sering served as president of the Philippine Olympic Committee for two terms (from 1984 to 1992) and the Patafa (from 1969 to 1981 and again for six years after the Edsa Revolution in 1986). He was succeeded as POC president in 1992 by Gen. Rene Cruz and also as Patafa head by his protégé Go Teng Kok, opting to become athletics chair, a position he held at the time of his death.

It was during Sering's term as POC president that the Philippines won her first ever gold medal in the Olympics when Arianne Cerdena topped the demonstration event of women's bowling at the 1988 Seoul Games. In the Asian Games, Sering presided over the stirring victories of the legendary Lydia de Vega, who won the centerpiece 100 meters back-to-back in 1982 in New Delhi and 1986 in Seoul. In the 1991 SEA Games held in Manila, Sering was the POC chief when the Philippines finished a strong second to overall winner Indonesia, garnering 91 golds, one shy behind the Indons, the meet's perennial champions.

He died in his BF Homes in Parañaque last Feb. 14 at age 76 after greeting his wife in Surigao del Norte "Happy Valentine's Day."

* * *

For inquiries, call fax/phone (044) 933-1214.

GMA invited to give athletes' incentives

By Marc Anthony Reyes

PRESIDENT Arroyo has been invited to award incentives to the first batch of recipients of the National Athletes and Coaches Incentives Act of 2001 on May 16 at the Heritage Hotel in Pasay City.

This was announced by Philippine Sports Commission chair Eric Buhain yesterday even as he revealed that the agency allocated at least P80 million to be distributed to 356 athletes and coaches who have contributed a lot for Philippine sports.

"We would like to have the President herself award the cash incentives especially since the whole project was her idea," said Buhain, of the Republic Act 9064, which was Ms Arroyo's first law regarding sports.

Buhain said the PSC has already started accepting claims from the athletes and coaches who met the criteria set by an inter-agency committee that includes the PSC and Philippine Amusements and Gaming Corporation, among others.

The PSC chair said that of the total budget, Pagcor is set to release P40 million on May 16, which will then be distributed in a formal ceremony.

Meanwhile, Buhain said the PSC on April 19 will start its monthly consultative assembly composed of top officials of the agency to look into the concerns of the athletes, especially those training for the Busan Asian Games.

To jumpstart the project, Buhain said they would inaugurate the athletes' lounge located at the second floor of the Rizal Memorial tennis center, which has been furnished through the help of corporate sponsors.

SPORTSWATCH

Blazers beat Lakers in double OT

PORTLAND, Oregon — The Trail Blazers staged two thrilling comebacks to beat Los Angeles in double overtime Sunday, 128-120. Bonzi Wells scored 33 points, and his steal from Kobe Bryant led to a dunk that broke a 115-all count in the second overtime. Rasheed Wallace added 25 points and 13 rebounds, and Damon Stoudamire had 18 points and 12 assists for the Blazers, who are locked into the sixth spot in the Western Conference. Shaquille O'Neal had 36 points and 11 rebounds, and Kobe Bryant added 23 points and nine assists for the Lakers, who now must fight it out with San Antonio and Dallas for the third playoff spot. **Complete results:** Philadelphia 95, Orlando 89; Indiana 86, Washington 80; Milwaukee 98, Charlotte 91; Toronto 101, New Jersey 82; Portland 128, L.A. Lakers 120, 2OT; New York 94, Miami 67; Memphis 98, Houston 95; Dallas 113, Sacramento 100. *AP*

Bergavera, Guba post double victories

FAVORITES Gerard Bergavera and Martina Guba scored double victories over the weekend in the Alibor-Accel Bacolod Tennis Classic at the Negros Occidental Tennis Association (NOTA) courts. Bergavera won the boys' 14-under title over fourth seed Jade dela Cruz, 6-1, 7-5 and later annexed the 12-under title via a 6-1, 6-1 triumph over third pick John Anthony Sobrevega. Guba, younger sister of junior standouts Johan and Yannick, won the girls' 12-under title after a 6-1, 6-1 decision over second seed Tao Yee Tan. Paul Millendez defeated Chat Conta, 6-2, 7-6 (8), for the boys' 18-under title and Arnold Rodriguez bagged the 16-under title over second seed Jancy Cusay, 3-6, 6-2, 10-2. The Philippine Tennis Association will hold the Luis Hilado Memorial Cup from April 22-28 at the Rizal Memorial Tennis Center. Registration is ongoing at the Philta office (tel. 525-64-34). Deadline of entry is on April 20 at 12 noon. Entry fee is P200.

Coseteng shines for Caltex-Havoline

COSETENG

SUBIC—Two-time champion Jovy Coseteng of Team Globe-Caltex-Red Horse Autoplus celebrated his return to local circuit racing, posting impressive victories at the start of the 2002 SVI-Petron Grand Prix before a big weekend crowd at the newly upgraded Subic International Raceway. Showing the form that made him the country's leading competition driver in 1995 and 1996, Coseteng swept the first two rounds of the centerpiece super saloon categroy in his newly acquired Honda Civic SIR to take top honors in this 14-part series organized by Sports Values Inc. in cooperation with the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority. The 39-year-old driver from Manila clocked 1:08.29.599 in the first round and 26:29.110 in the second round, including the day's fastetst lap time of 1:32.138 at the 3-km racetrack at Cubi Pt. "I'm very happy to win again here in Subic," said Coseteng.

NCR lady booters claim national title

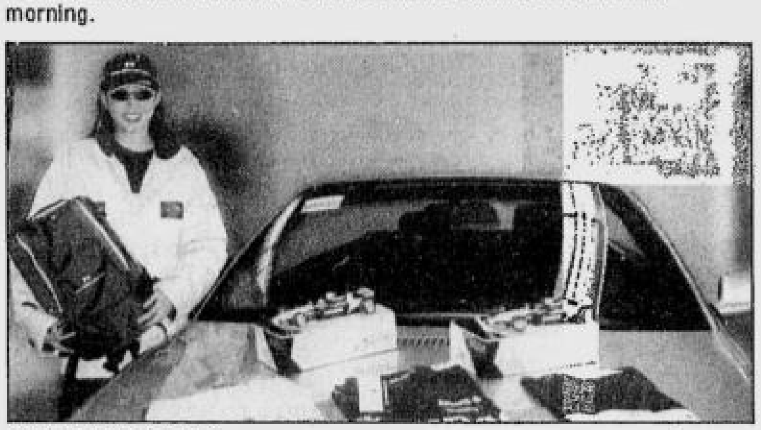
NATIONAL Capital Region's crack lady booters posted a lopsided 8-0 victory over their Laguna rivals to clinch the sixth national women's football crown Sunday at the Ateneo field. Brenda Gayagoy struck in the first minute to mark the Metro Manilans' sparkling display of grit and power in the tourney organized by the Philippine Football Federation. Gayagoy, who was eventually named the event's best midfield, scored her second goal in the 44th minute. Josephine Loren also produced two markers (76th and 86th), while Joyce Landagan, Elda Alcantara, Sheeryn Ambrosio and Rea Villa came through with one goal each in the 25th, 53rd, 78 and 81 minutes, respectively. Two-time champion Davao settled for third place by beating Negros Occidental, 8-1.

Break 4 derby today at Roligon

AFICIONADOS will be treated once again to exciting encounters with the holding of the summer Break 4-Cock Derby today at the Roligon Mega Cockpit in Parañaque City. Hosted by Ronel Tanada, Mario Gujelde, Macky Senosa and Lito Alcantara, this derby will be supported by cocker-breeders from Metro Manila, Taguig, Pateros, Batangas, Cavite, Laguna, Iloilo, Bacolod and other parts of the Visayas. The hosts said that for a minimum bet of P4,400 and P8,800 entry fee the winner will receive a cash prize of P300,000. The handler and the gaffer will be given P20,000 and P10,000, respectively Weights between 1.9 kg and 2.4 kg must be submitted today from 6 a.m. to 4 p.m.

GS Superio crew returns from South

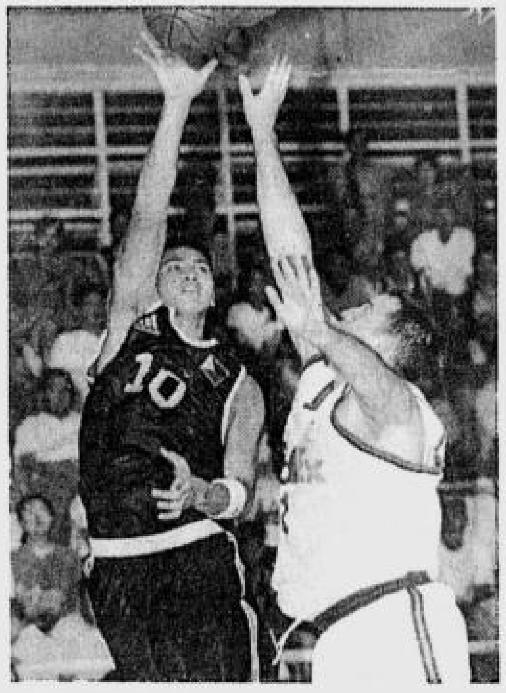
AFTER encountering heavy rains down south, the four-man Nissan Exalta GS Superio crew made its way back to Manila just before midnight Sunday after conquering the roads of the Visayas and Mindanao in the first stage of the 30-day, non-stop fourth Pan Philippine-Marathon. A beat-up crew of Juvy Catajoy, Mon Dizon, Lester Susi and Willy Avila turned over the sparkling silver colored sedan with a potent QG 1.6-liter engine to Willie Ingles, who is spearheading the northern Luzon expedition beginning early Monday morning.



BMW-WILLIAMS

Prestige Cars Makati will sell original Team Williams-BMW F1 apparel and accessories at the Rockwell Center's Power Plant mall on April 19-21. Items include a full complement of Schumacher/Montoya T-shirts, bags, caps, jackets, assorted scale replicas and other team paraphernalia. Also to be displayed are the latest BWM vehicles from Prestige Cars Makati which is located along Pasong Tamo extension. Williams-BMW F1 finished 1-2 in the recent Malaysian Grand Prix.

Davao faces Pampanga



ADDUCUL (left) scores off Jeffrey Flowers in this file photo.

FIRST CONFERENCE

Standings	W	L		W	L
Lhuillier	3	0	Davao	2	2
RCPI Negros	3	1	Pampanga	0	2
Pangasinan	2	1	LBC Batangas	0	2
Olongapo	2	1	C. de Oro	0	3

GAME TODAY (RMC Gym, Davao)
6 p.m.—Pampanga vs Davao

THE PROFESSIONAL Davao Eagles try to continue their climb in the MBA First Conference when they tangle with the fading Pampanga Stars at 6 p.m. today at the RMC Gym in Davao.

Showing that they can't be dismissed as title contenders, the Eagles downed the Olongapo Volunteers, 97-91, in overtime on Saturday to halt a two-game skid.

Against the Stars, the Eagles have been tagged the slight favorites.

First, because the Eagles will be playing in their homecourt for the first time after splitting four games on the road.

Second, the Stars have yet to win after two starts.

Professional Davao coach Bong Go is again expected to bank on the gutsy Bong Marata, Genesis Sasuman, Mike Manigo, Cid White, Peter Simon and rookies Billy Mamaril and Jon Dan Salvador for the Eagles to be able to break into the upper half of the standings.

Of course, the Stars are no pushovers.

They lose to the RCPI Negros Slashers via overtime, 76-67, and were only edged by the Osaka Pangasinan Waves, 92-90, on Sunday.

The addition of veteran Romy de la Rosa has given the Stars' more offensive sock, which should give playing coach Ato Agustin more leeway.

Meanwhile, Romel Adducul of Pangasinan Waves and Egay Echavez of Cebuana Lhuillier shared best player honors for the week.

Adducul, the 2000 MVP, scored 26 points and grabbed 12 rebounds to lead the Waves past the Stars, while Echavez pumped in 26 points in the Gems' 106-101 conquest of the Cagayan de Oro Amigos also on Sunday.

Parks hoops school offers free ball, jersey

THE BOBBY Parks Hoops School has been bombarded with calls since it was announced that the 7-time Best Import awardee has teamed up with former Shell PBA manager and PBL Commissioner Charlie Favis to organize a professional basketball school to teach kids the correct way to play basketball,

Every enrollee who pays the registration fee of only P980 gets a free basketball from Molten, free jersey from Mossimo, free sports socks from Burlington, free Knapsack bag and VCD featuring training tips from NBA superstars and coaches. Basketball notes/referee manual and hand signals, basketball fundamental slide chart will also be given. For every 5 enrollees, The Hoops School will also give one scholarship to a deserving kid living in depressed areas.

Parks will also be showing video tapes and an AVP on basketball fundamentals. Topics like attitude, sportsmanship, teammanship, respect, composure, concentration, time management, and others will be discussed lengthily in classroom type lecture.

The program is a two week, six-session (every other day) program, and enrollment is still ongoing for the April 20 batch, the May 7 batch and the May 16 batch. The program is open to kids—8 to 11 years old (8:30 a.m.) and 12 to 16 years of age (2:30 p.m.) Interested kids my call up the Hoops School at tel/fax. 687-4364.

Ucap cockfest tonight

MANDALUYONG Coliseum's "9th Ucap SanPedro GP Bacolod Group 7-Cock Derby" is all set today with Sagupaan Super Feeds and Washout Shampoo of Lakpue Drug as sponsors.

Jet Fernando and Ramon Mansenares will host the event with the Bacolod Group.

Coming in full force are Pampanga's big-time cockers like Jung Jingco, Terence Madlambayan, Joel Fernando, B. Pineda, Eric Lu, Jimmy Mariquit, engineer Ramos and Val Lagman.

From Negros Occidental are Choy Ampil, Otic Geroso, Arnold Mendoza, engineer Elwin Javelosa, Al Garcia, Boy Nilo Lizares, Danilo Hinlo, Mayor Juancho Aguirre and Nene Abello.

Last week, engineer Sonny Lagon and Mayor Joel Brillantes (Blue Blade JBB) topped the "8th Ucap Bumble Bee Balbina Roadmaster 7-Cock Derby" by posting six wins and one loss.

What A Guy GF-Ban of businessman-sportsman Vic Yu and Arnold Mendoza was solo runner-up finisher with 5.5 points while Mayor Gerry "Boy" Espina (AT Alkalde Dominator), lawyer Ram Lopez and Tony Litonjua (Starwars Altuz) Rep. Claude Bautista and Boyboy Roa (R and B Farm I) and King Boxer finished in the money with five points each.

For inquiries, contact 534-4110, 531-4003, 531-4005 and 535-2341.

Ana freezes Kutitap, 79-73

By Dennis U. Eroa

RESURGENT Ana Freezers used a suffocating defense throughout to trim Kutitap Toothpaste, 79-73, for its second straight win yesterday in the PBL Chairman's Cup at the Pasig Sports Center.

Cebuano hotshot James Laygo exploded with 20 points even as Dondon Mendoza and Roland Pascual combined for 27, but it was Ana's shackling of the high-scoring Cyrus Baguio that spelled the difference in the roller-coaster game.

Ana continued its recovery after losing its first two games, while stopping Kutitap's two-game winning streak. As a result, Ateneo-Hapee-Negros Navigation secured solo top spot with a 3-0 card, followed by Kutitap and International Container Terminal Services Inc-La Salle with 2-1 cards.

With the 6-foot-2 Baguio unable to click with Ronald Tubid guarding him, Kutitap's offense was in disarray.

Obviously frustrated by Tubid's leech-like stance, Baguio even committed a technical foul, his fifth, on the Ana defender, 2:40 left and the Freezer Kings protecting a 69-61 lead.

LeoVillar, Paul Artadi, Robin Mendoza and Pascual kept the Sparklers at bay by hitting their shots in the homestretch.

ANA 79—Laygo 20, Mendoza D 15, Pascual 12, Artadi 8, Tubid 6, Vilar 5, De Guzman 4, Oreta 4, Mendoza 2, Mamaclay 2, Gumatay 1.

KUTITAP 73—Baguio 17, Saquilayan 13, Salangsang 12, Espiritu 8, Mercado 8, Gelig 8, Rivera 4, Sison 2, Dy 1, Catli 0, Mallari 0.

Quarters: 25-19, 50-43, 65-56, 79-73

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SPORTS

Editor **Al S. Mendoza** ◎ Assistant Editor **Edwin M. Villanueva**

WOODS

SPORTS ON TV

Compiled by Lorenzo Mangulat

GOLF: LPGA Kraft Nabisco Championship, Second Round at 10 a.m. (r) on ESPN

2002 Masters, Final Day Highlights at 11 a.m. (r) on Star Sports

Senior PGA Liberty Mutual Legends of Golf, Second Round at 2 p.m. (r) on Star Sports

Golfglobe 2002 at 3:30 p.m. (r) on Star Sports

■ Woods wins his 3rd Masters title since '97 /A18

■ MBA, PBL results; GMA guest in P80-M athletes event /A19

FILE PHOTO

STROTHERS: One-game suspension.

SMB tries to end bid of Hapee

Teams	W	L		W	L
Talk N Text	8	1	Alaska	5	5
Purefoods	8	2	San Miguel	4	5
Coca-Cola	7	3	Hapee-RP	4	6
FedEx	6	4	Selecta-RP	3	7
Red Bull	5	4	Ginebra	2	7
Sta. Lucia	5	5	Shell	1	9

GAME TODAY *(Philsports)*
6-p.m.—Hapee-RP vs San Miguel Beer

By June Navarro

SAN Miguel Beer tries to end the quarterfinal ambitions of Hapee-RP Team when they collide today in the PBA Samsung Governors Cup at the Philsports Arena. Gametime is 6 p.m.,

But the Beermen will have to do it the hard way because SMB top gunner Lamont Strothers is serving a one-game suspension.

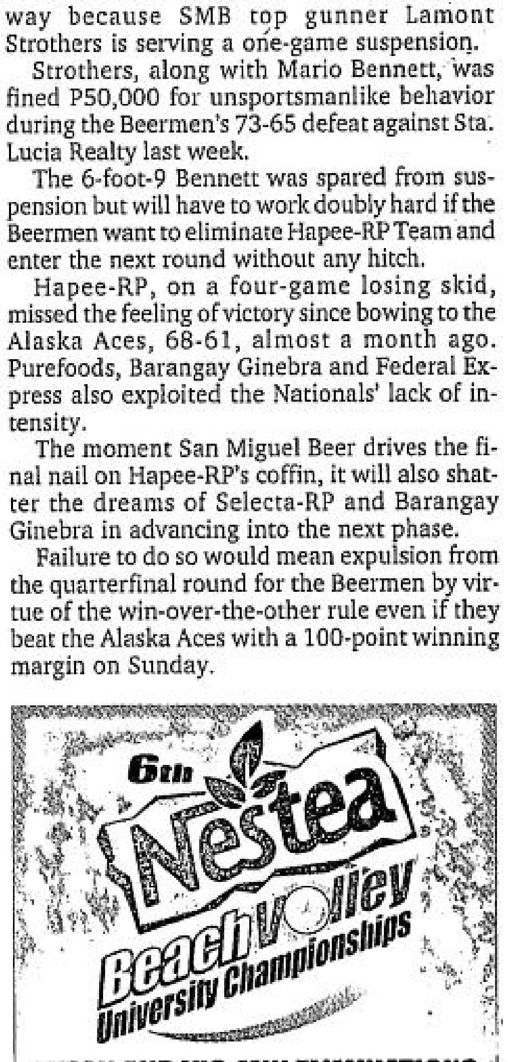
Strothers, along with Mario Bennett, was fined P50,000 for unsportsmanlike behavior during the Beermen's 73-65 defeat against Sta. Lucia Realty last week.

The 6-foot-9 Bennett was spared from suspension but will have to work doubly hard if the Beermen want to eliminate Hapee-RP Team and enter the next round without any hitch.

Hapee-RP, on a four-game losing skid, missed the feeling of victory since bowing to the Alaska Aces, 68-61, almost a month ago. Purefoods, Barangay Ginebra and Federal Express also exploited the Nationals' lack of intensity.

The moment San Miguel Beer drives the final nail on Hapee-RP's coffin, it will also shatter the dreams of Selecta-RP and Barangay Ginebra in advancing into the next phase.

Failure to do so would mean expulsion from the quarterfinal round for the Beermen by virtue of the win-over-the-other rule even if they beat the Alaska Aces with a 100-point winning margin on Sunday.



LUZON AND VIS-MIN ELIMINATIONS
TEAM RANKING AS OF APRIL 13, 2002

Team	PTS. WON	PTS. LOST	QUOTIENT	RANK
WOMEN'S Division				
LUZON				
DLSU - Dasma	42	20	2.1000	1
Pangasinan State Univ.	42	32	1.3125	2
VIS-MIN				
Foundation Univ.	42	18	2.3333	1
Holy Cross Davao Coll.	37	33	1.1212	2
MEN'S Division				
LUZON				
Univ. of Assumption	21	3	7.0000	1
PCU - Dasma	21	13	1.6154	2
VIS-MIN				
Foundation Univ.	42	26	1.6154	1
Univ. of San Agustin	47	35	1.3429	2

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METRO

Editor Louie C. Camino

WPD chief beats cop over dispersal /A23

Not enough forces for Edsa 3—Abalos /A22

We have a strong case vs BMW woman, investigators say

'Witness saw her holding gun'

By Christian V. Esguerra

POLICE yesterday said they have enough evidence to bring to court the woman from Ayala-Alabang who is suspected of killing her husband's private nurse in Las Piñas City last Friday.

"We have a strong case," said investigator SPO4 Ben Javier, citing the account of witness Wensis Tablang, 31, the woman's bodyguard-driver.

"His statement is strong," Javier stressed. "He was a witness to the crime. He was there."

Javier said police would file murder charges against Marybeth Lopez de Leon, 57, for the killing of nurse Belma Abella (not Andrada as earlier reported), 46, in De Leon's BMW sedan.

In a three-page sworn statement, Tablang said he saw De Leon alighting from her dark-blue car and holding a Gluck-type 9-mm pistol at about 7:40 a.m. Friday.

The bodyguard-driver told police that inside the car, the bloodied Abella was calling his name and asking for help.

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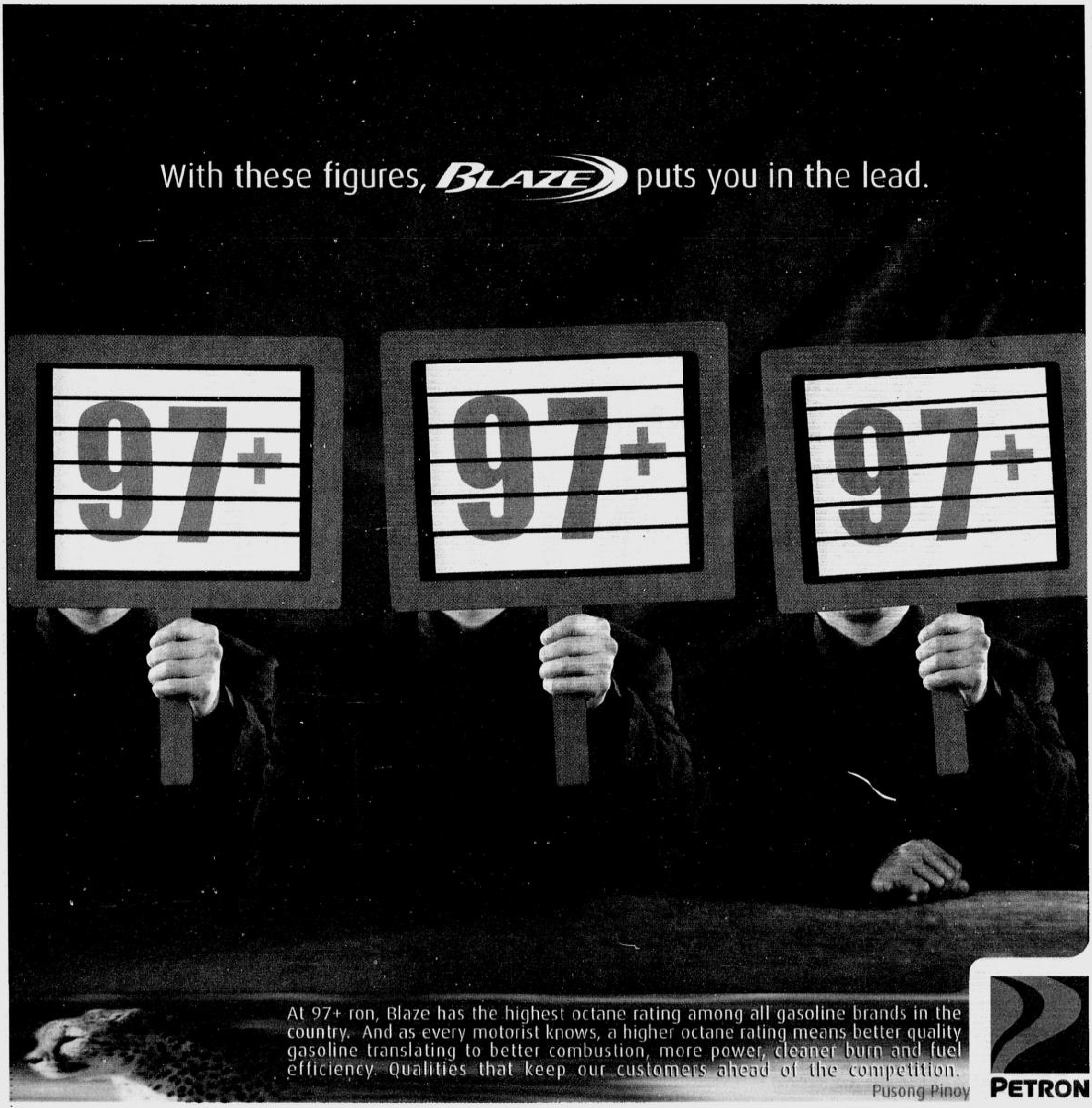

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Pusong Pinoy

Vienna controversy: the envoy's side

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

I GOT a rebuke from the Philippine Ambassador to Vienna, Victor G. Garcia III, over my item about him and his wife in this space April 6.

"With one stroke of the pen, you have maligned us. I do not know what offense my wife and I committed to deserve such a sweeping indictment," the ambassador said. ``This is wholly unfair and I want to set the record straight as soon as possible so that your readers will know the truth."

I said in my April 6 column, citing the allegations of a Filipino friend in Vienna, that Garcia and his wife, Connie, were unpopular among the Filipino community in Austria and have brought shame to the country.

Also quoting the Vienna source, I enumerated the accusations against Garcia and his wife.

***

The ambassador said all the accusations against him and his wife "are false and fabricated lies." He said it is not true that he was kicked out of Kobe, Japan, and Los Angeles as consul general. He left those places, he said, after completing his tour of duty.

The ambassador said that my source, Maria Luisa de Vera-Garcia (no relation to him), made the accusations because she is the best friend of Consul General Maria Cleofe Natividad of the embassy in Vienna.

Garcia and his consul general are at loggerheads.

***

The ambassador said his quarrel with Natividad started when she issued a passport to Arnel Gutierrez, who is serving a prison sentence for raping a 13-year-old Austrian girl.

When he learned about the issuance of the passport, Garcia said he "severely reprimanded Consul Natividad because she had issued a passport to him (Gutierrez) without my knowledge and approval as head of post."

According to the ambassador, Gutierrez was involved in the trafficking of illegal drugs in Austria and "has victimized thousands of Filipino children here."

***

Gutierrez was issued the passport, Garcia said, so he could get married to an Austrian citizen and "avoid being deported from Austria after serving his prison sentence."

"Gutierrez would then be free to continue victimizing our Filipino children in Austria through illegal drug dealing," the ambassador said.

After he confronted the consul general on the passport issuance, Natividad reportedly sought the help of people outside on her problems with the embassy.

***

"She solicited the help of Ms Maria Luisa de Vera-Garcia and together they launched a vicious campaign of black propaganda and character assassination against me and my wife, Connie," said the ambassador.

On Feb. 28, Foreign Secretary Teofisto Guingona directed the transfer of Natividad to Geneva, he said.

"But because Consul Natividad is in Vienna, she and her best friend Ms Garcia have continued their vicious attacks against us by distributing poison letters and copies of your April 6 column. In other words, you too were misled and used," Garcia told me in a letter faxed to the Inquirer.

***

The majority of the Filipinos in Vienna, the ambassador said, support his leadership.

A Filipino group in Vienna, calling itself Council of Filipino Associations in Austria, sent me a letter through the Internet saying that the Garcia-Natividad rift has hurt the Filipino community.

Romeo Rojo Molina, saying he is the group's chair, said the Filipino community in Austria is united.

"The community, however, has been badly hurt by the events of Feb. 22, 2002 and after. The image of the Filipinos as a peace-loving and well-integrated minority is threatened," he said.

He was referring to the demonstration in front of the Philippine embassy in Vienna against Ambassador Garcia, reportedly the first such demonstration in 30 years.

***

The management of the Mandarin Oriental Hotel may have violated the human rights of a former employee who was barred from entering the hotel as a guest.

Rachel Grace P. Rogel, 27, a hotel nurse who has resigned, was manhandled by Vicente Felizardo, the hotel's chief security officer, when he saw her in the hotel recently.

Rogel went to the hotel to fetch her friend, a fellow nurse. They would have dined at one of the hotel's restaurants.

***

Rogel resigned due to a misunderstanding with her superior, the medical director of hotel. She didn't know that her former superior had issued an order banning her from the hotel premises.

So, when Felizardo saw her in the hotel, he asked her to leave immediately. But she refused to leave, saying she hadn't done anything wrong.

After she was shoved and held in the arm by the security officer, Rogel said she reported the incident to the management.

But the management ignored her, she said.

Is that how Mandarin treats its guests?

***

You know why Rogel and the hotel's medical director had a misunderstanding?

It was because of her concern for a guest who asked for a doctor as he was suffering from asthma. Rogel said it was a Sunday and there was no doctor at the clinic, so she referred the guest to a doctor who is not employed by the hotel.

When the hotel's medical director learned about this, he berated her. She resigned.

***

Probably because they go over a lot of copy, proofreaders and editors in newspapers make glaring errors.

Last Saturday's issue in this column was an example. Both the proofreader and editor failed to see the typographical error; hence, this correction.

The passage, "But when an officer reaches the rank and full control, he becomes a political bureaucrat, subject to the whims of the civilian authority," should have read: ``But when an officer reaches the rank of full colonel...etc."

Not enough forces for Edsa 3—Abalos

By Christian V. Esguerra

THERE will be no repeat of Edsa 3 since loyalists of deposed President Joseph Estrada have no capability to gather enough forces and launch another bloody siege on Malacañang on Labor Day, according to Metro Manila Development Authority Chair Benjamin Abalos Sr.

"I don't think the opposition can still mobilize enough forces that can do another Edsa 3," Abalos said on Sunday.

"It's not that they're crippled," he said. "It's just that all sectors of society are now supportive of the President."

Metro Manila mayors have been monitoring the activities of Estrada's supporters, he said. So far, the local executives have not noticed any mobilization especially in Manila and in the northern part of the metropolis, which are considered bailiwicks of Estrada, Abalos said.

He noted that there was not enough reason for any public uproar that might snowball into another popular revolt aimed at unseating President Macapagal-Arroyo.

"Of course, there's still a high unemployment (rate)," he said. "Poverty is still a problem. But I think the public knows that these problems would take time to get solved."

Estrada loyalists led by the People's Movement Against Poverty are set to stage a massive protest action on May 1 to commemorate their failed attempt to overthrow the Macapagal administration in a violent assault of Malacañang on Labor Day last year.

Major labor groups also vowed to stage the biggest May 1 rally to denounce the President's decision to make Labor Day a working day for "economic" reasons.

They said the government should not have moved the celebration of Labor Day to April 29, a Monday, especially since they would be commemorating the centennial of unionism in the Philippines.

Major roads off limits to pedicabs

By Jerome Aning

PEDICABS will continue to be allowed to operate in Manila but they cannot use major roads and must follow traffic rules all the time.

Mayor Lito Atienza stressed this yesterday following last week's dialogue with about 500 pedicab drivers at the Bulwagang Antonio Villegas in City Hall.

The city government a few weeks ago ordered a crackdown on pedicab drivers who violate the ban on their use of major roads.

Hundreds of pedicabs have been confiscated, prompting drivers and operators to appeal to City Hall for the release of their units.

"My administration recognizes pedicab driving as legitimate way of earning a living," the mayor told the drivers. "However, as I have said countless times in the past, you are expected to follow traffic rules."

The apologetic drivers promised to obey and cooperate with the traffic authorities.

City Hall is preparing a long-term plan to phase out pedicabs even as it looks for alternative jobs for the drivers who will be displaced.

The mayor said driving a pedicab risks not only the life and health of the driver but also of the passenger.

Atienza said he also regards pedicab driving, as a means of earning a living, as "not humane and indicates social disparity."

He pointed out that in China, driving rickshaws has been phased out because the ruling communist government considered it inhuman. A rickshaw is a small, light, two-wheeled vehicle drawn by one man.

But the mayor stressed that until the phaseout plan is finalized, the pedicabs would be tolerated.

City Hall recently launched the "Sikap Padyak" program, which makes interest-free loans with easy payment terms available to poor, jobless residents who want to buy and operate pedicabs.

"I know your job is difficult as you are exposed to the elements and have to work more than 10 hours a day, pedaling in the heat of the sun and breathing polluted air," the mayor told the drivers.

"Still, you have to follow the rules or you will be arrested and your pedicab will be confiscated," he added.

MAYO 1
100T
-PM
Mayo 1
100T
-PM
MAYO 1
100T
-PM

JOAN BONDOC

THE DEFIANT ONES

Members of the Partido ng Manggagawa raise their fists in defiance of President Macapagal-Arroyo's declaration of April 29 as Labor Day. In a news conference in Quezon City yesterday, they vowed that 100,000 workers would be mobilized in a protest on the original Labor Day, May 1.

Jancom deal works against waste reduction, environment groups say

By Alcuin Papa

THE ORIGINAL contract between the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority and the garbage firm Jancom, which is seeking to renegotiate the deal, is flawed and works against waste reduction, according to the environmental group Greenpeace.

Greenpeace spokesperson Francis de la Cruz yesterday said the "put or pay" scheme in the original deal guarantees payment for garbage collected even if the collection falls below the target.

"This works against waste reduction because you have more incentive to throw away waste," De la Cruz said yesterday.

Jancom is renegotiating its contract with the MMDA and is facing opposition from environmental groups.

De la Cruz said any garbage contract should take into consideration the Clean Air Act and the Environmental Solid Waste Management Act, both of which were passed during the term of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

"It's not right to renegotiate that deal," he said. "Any deal should take into consideration the current state policy on waste management and disposal. There is a new policy atmosphere because of the passage of these new laws. If they would renegotiate, it should be within the framework of the new laws."

The old Jancom contract does not reflect the new policy of "the promotion of segregation, composting, recycling and waste avoidance," De la Cruz said.

"They don't seem to recognize the change in government's thinking brought about by the new laws."

Ester Perez de Tagle of the Concerned Citizens Against Pollution also said any renegotiations will violate the original contract.

A provision in the original contract stipulates that no renegotiations for the contract is allowed and that any renegotiations should be the subject of another deal altogether, De Tagle said.

"No amendments can be effected on any part of the contract without another contract," she said. "If you want to change any key provision, you have to negotiate again and enter into another contract to be signed by two parties."

The renegotiations should take into account the laws passed on waste segregation and the Clean Air Act, she said.

Jancom officials had said they were consulting with the MMDA on possible renegotiations of the contract. They said they had already lowered their original tipping fee from $53 to $39.

But the renegotiations were stalled when the MMDA said they would ask the Supreme Court for a clarification of their Jan. 30 ruling on the deal.

The high court had ruled that the original Jancom garbage contract was "valid and perfected" and could be implemented if the President signed it.

But various non-government organizations had protested the deal, claiming it was passed under questionable circumstances and that it would defraud the government of P390 billion.

We have...

From page A21

Police said this account was enough to prove that it was De Leon who shot and killed the nurse since they were the only ones in the car at the time of the shooting.

Tablang said that after he seized the gun from De Leon, she made him choose between coming with her and leaving Abella in the car, and helping the wounded nurse. He said he decided to rush the nurse to the hospital.

Javier said police were still looking for a village security guard who saw De Leon and his bodyguard grappling for the gun, to corroborate Tablang's account.

Tablang said that before the shooting, he drove De Leon from her residence in Ayala-Alabang to BF International Village in Las Pi¤as where her husband Jose Vicente Madrigal de Leon has another house.

He said the husband and his security aides were not in the Las Pi¤as house, so he and De Leon proceeded to Abella's house on Chico Street in nearby Barangay Talon. He said De Leon ordered him to ask Abella to go to the car because De Leon wanted to talk to her.

"While they were talking, Mrs. de Leon's voice was quite high and she told me to drive to the house of her husband in BF International," the driver said in his sworn statement.

"There was a tinge of jealousy in their conversation and it seemed that Abella was not telling my boss what was exactly happening," he continued. "It also seemed that the people whom my boss were supposed to trust were keeping things from her."

Tablang said that at the corner of Tropical Avenue and Elizalde Streets, De Leon asked him to alight from the car because she and the nurse would talk about something "personal."

He said that about two minutes later, De Leon, carrying a gun, alighted through the left rear door of the car and he saw Abella lying wounded in the back seat.

Abella's relatives yesterday went to the Las Pi¤as police headquarters to file charges against De Leon, according to SPO4 Javier.

Owners of unredeemed licenses face legal action, MMDA warns

By Alcuin Papa

THE METROPOLITAN Manila Development Authority (MMDA) will bring to court apprehended motorists who do not redeem their licenses.

The MMDA will furnish the National Bureau of Investigation and the Department of Foreign Affairs with the list of the motorists who have been sued to prevent the concerned motorists from securing NBI clearances and passports, according to the MMDA.

In a news conference yesterday, MMDA Chair Benjamin Abalos Sr. said the agency would initiate legal action for violation of the motor vehicle law against motorists who fail to redeem their licenses within the prescribed 36-hour period.

Abalos said he has already ordered the MMDA's Traffic Operations Center to furnish him a list of apprehended drivers who have not redeemed their licenses. He said he would forward this to the agency's legal division for proper action.

"The percentage of unredeemed licenses is increasing," he said. "This year, 25 out of 100 confiscated licenses are not redeemed by their owners."

He said that last year alone, around 35,000 drivers did not redeem their licenses. He said that for the government, this would translate to revenue loss of about P3.5 million.

Abalos said that for every license not redeemed within the prescribed period, the MMDA loses around P100 in revenues.

Once the list of apprehended motorists is compiled by the MMDA, it will be submitted to the fiscal of the city or municipality where the traffic violation is committed. The fiscal will then send notices to the concerned parties asking them to appear before the fiscal.

The fiscal will decide whether to elevate the case of non-payment of traffic fines, a criminal charge, to a trial court. If a case is filed and the motorist fails to appear during the scheduled hearing, a warrant of arrest can be issued.

Abalos pointed out that the NBI does not issue clearances to those apprehended for littering. He said this should also apply to motorists who do not redeem their licenses.

"People still do not know that a lot of people apprehended for littering come to us crying and settling their fines after they find out they cannot be issued an NBI clearance," Abalos said.

WPD chief beats cop over dispersal

By Philip C. Tubeza

ANGERED at the violent dispersal of about 20 protesters in front of the US Embassy in Manila, Chief Supt. Nicolas Pasinos Jr. of the Western Police District yesterday berated his men and even hit one of them in the head with a truncheon.

"Nobody will disperse anyone without my order!" Pasinos shouted. "I have been on the ground for nearly 20 years and I had never found the need to disperse 20 protesters as this will be playing to their game."

Violence erupted after anti-riot policemen dispersed some 20 militants protesting the deployment of American troops in Central Luzon for the RP-US Balikatan war games.

About 20 YND members marched in front of the US Embassy at about 11 a.m. yesterday to protest the Balikatan exercises.

Police said Youth for National Democracy members Patricio Montemayor, 33, and a 15-year-old male protester were arrested and would be charged for disturbing the peace. The militants are preparing counter-charges against the police.

About 10 protesters were hurt in the melee but it was only Montemayor and his companion who were able to present a medico-legal report, police said.

In a press statement, the YND said "the arrival of US troops for the Balikatan is just part and parcel of the US plan of displaying their military might and safeguarding their economic interest and political interests in the Asia-Pacific region."

At 11:15 a.m., the protesters tried to break through the phalanx of anti-riot policemen and threw green and red paint at the embassy seal.

This led police to disperse the protesters, who retaliated by throwing stones at the anti-riot policemen, who then beat up the protesters with their shields and truncheons even as the militants crossed the northbound lane of Roxas Boulevard, across the embassy.

Some media men, particularly television cameramen and photographers, were also caught in the middle of the ruckus.

Brownell Sonza, a senior cameraman of GMA-7, said their camera's "sun gun," worth P10,000, was damaged after it was hit by riot policemen.

An angry Pasinos arrived at the scene when the melee ended and started berating his men.

Ermita police station chief Supt. Manolo Martinez said there would be an investigation to determine if the Civil Disturbance Management policemen violated the PNP's rule of maximum tolerance during rallies.

CRUSHED

Movie star Jolina Magdangal witnesses the destruction by police of thousands of pieces of pirated CDs and VCDs in Camp Crame in Quezon City. The music and movie industries have been reeling from the crushing blows delivered by fakers of music records and video CDs.

DENNIS SABANGAN

Jail guard kills jeepney robber, is stabbed dead

By Philip C. Tubeza

ROOKIE jail guard JO2 Ramil Chonggayao died in front of his girlfriend while fighting off three holdup men on board a passenger jeepney in Sampaloc, Manila on Sunday night.

Before he died, Chonggayao, who was supposed to go abroad, was able to kill one of the holdup men.

Chonggayao, 24, assigned to the Manila City Jail, suffered several stab wounds in the chest after he shot Dinly Rollon, 26, of Pandacan, Manila, in the forehead, said the Western Police District homicide section.

Rollon's cohorts escaped and remain unidentified, investigators said.

Police said the robbery happened at about 9 p.m. Sunday on the Legarda flyover in Sampaloc.

Chonggayao and his girlfriend, who was not immediately identified, were on board a San Juan-Divisioria jeep when the three men suddenly brought out knives and announced the holdup.

Police said Chonggayao drew his service firearm and shot Rollon right in the forehead. The suspect died on the spot but his companions ganged up on the jail guard and repeatedly stabbed him, police said.

The two suspects jumped off the jeepney and ran.

Chonggayao's girlfriend cried out for help and some pedicab drivers who heard the commotion helped her bring him to the De Ocampo Medical Center but the victim was declared dead on arrival.

Police were trying to get descriptions of the suspects from the other passengers.

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HART'S WAR - P 13 11:40, 2:15, 4:50, 7:25, 10:00	**SHOWTIME - P 13** 12:50, 3:05, 5:20, 7:35, 9:50	**E.T. - GP** 1:50, 4:20, 6:50, 9:30
COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO - P 13 1:40, 4:15, 6:50, 9:30	**MIMIC 2 - P 13** 12:35, 2:25, 4:15, 6:05, 7:55, 9:45	**ICE AGE - GP** 12:30, 2:15, 4:00, 5:45, 7:30, 9:20

Matinee, P80, Mon.-Fri.,11:00 am to 4:45 pm Screenings, Free Seating.

QC hopes to exceed collection target

By Agnes E. Donato

QUEZON City Mayor Feliciano "Sonny" Belmonte yesterday expressed hope that the city government will exceed its projected tax collection of P3.7 billion for this year.

Belmonte reported that City Hall had posted an increase of P715 million, or a 73 percent rise, in total tax collection for the first quarter of the year, as compared to the collection during the same period last year.

He said the city treasury office was able to accumulate a total of P2.6 billion in taxes since last January.

City Hall increased its collection of real estate taxes by 104 percent from January until the April 6 deadline for payment, he said.

The previous administration managed to collect P275.2 million in real estate taxes for the first quarter of 2001, but Belmonte's government reportedly secured P565.4 million.

In business taxes, the city government was able to collect P967 million for the first quarter, as compared to the P578.7 million posted for the same period last year.

City treasurer Victor Endriga said that growth in the city's tax collection indicated the effectiveness of the new tax collection schemes being implemented by the present administration.

Instead of granting the traditional tax amnesty to delinquent taxpayers, City Hall granted a 20-percent discount to taxpayers who paid their taxes in advance.

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in celebration of
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at (075) 522-7550 or 515-4241

Event Highlights

Kalutan ed Dagupan
(The City's Bid for the World's Longest Grill)

Dagupan's inihaw na bangus will vie for immortality in the pages of Guinness Book of World Records when families, clans, organizations, corporations, businesses, local and barangay officials, will take part in the world's longest grill and simultaneously grill the world's best tasting Dagupan bangus. Bands and orchestra will play in eight makeshift stages and all radios will be tuned in to one official radio station, thus it will be one big street party and a record breaking event.

Gilon! Gilon! (A Bangus Harvest Street Dance Fest)

Taking cognizance of the pride, honor and huge economic benefit the local bangus industry is contributing to the city and its people; a festivity that gives honor to the fishing folks who harvest the bangus from its controlled habitat is a stroke of gratefulness from a grateful people. A bangus dance in giant bangus costumes, performed by representatives from all sectors of the city, will highlight the gilon tradition. Winners will be judged on the basis of their adherence to the basic steps of gilon dance and their creativity in portraying an actual gilon

101 ways to cook Bangus

The succulent flavor of Dagupan bangus can be tasted in any which way it is cooked or not cooked at all. That is why there are more than a hundred ways to cook or prepare it and, still, it is distinctly Dagupan Bangus. This event is a gustatory feast where chefs from the city's finest seafood restaurants will compete to present the best tasting bangus concoctions in four menu: 1) Soup 2) Appetizer 3) Main Course 4) Dessert. After the competition, an eat-all-bangus-you-can pre-sold lunch will culminate the event.

Mutya ng Dagat

What more can best represent the beauty and grandeur of our tribute to the city's number one produce — Dagupan's Bangus — than selecting the fairest and the loveliest candidates for Mutya ng Dagat 2002. Thirty-one young girls representing their respective barangays will vie for the coveted crown and the pageant night is the culminating event.

Dagupan City Bangus Rodeo

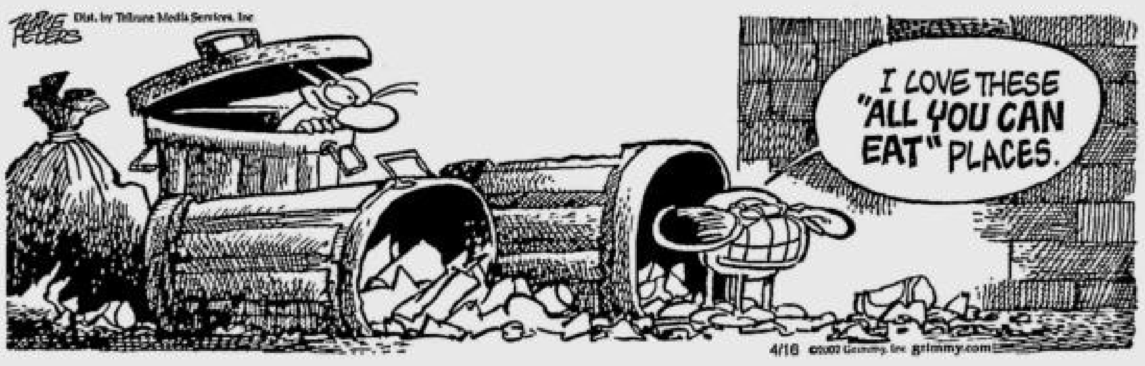
A road show right in the heart of the city's public market, the rodeo features the search for the longest, the heaviest and the most beautiful bangus. The event will also select the fastest bangus deboner.

Have Fun in Dagupan!

WORLD'S LONGEST GRILL
Kalutan ed Dagupan!
1,001
METERS

MOTHER GOOSE & GRIMM

BY MIKE PETERS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I LOVE THESE "ALL YOU CAN EAT" PLACES.
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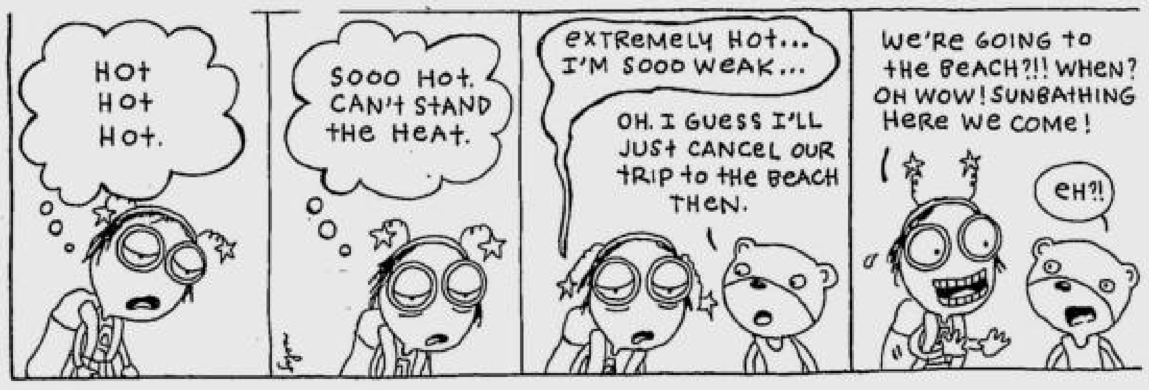
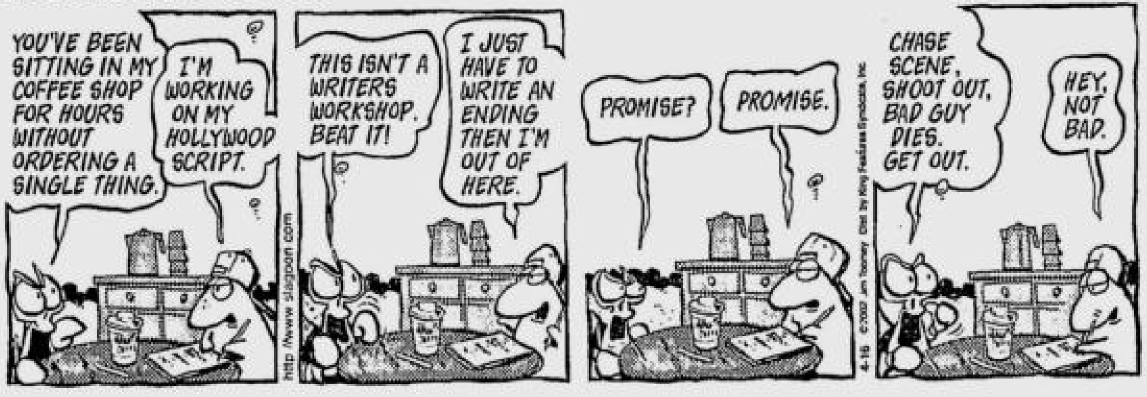
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


Hot Hot Hot.
Sooo Hot. CAN't StAND the HeAt.
extremely Hot... I'M SOOO WeAK...
OH. I GUeSS I'LL JUSt CANCeL OUR tRIP to tHe BeACH THeN.
We're GOING to tHe BeACH?!! WHeN? OH WOW! SUNBAtHING Here We COMe!
eH?!

SHERMAN'S LAGOON

BY JIM TOOMEY


YOU'VE BEEN SITTING IN MY COFFEE SHOP FOR HOURS WITHOUT ORDERING A SINGLE THING.
I'M WORKING ON MY HOLLYWOOD SCRIPT.
THIS ISN'T A WRITERS WORKSHOP. BEAT IT!
I JUST HAVE TO WRITE AN ENDING THEN I'M OUT OF HERE.
PROMISE?
PROMISE.
CHASE SCENE, SHOOT OUT, BAD GUY DIES. GET OUT.
HEY, NOT BAD.
http://www.slagoon.com
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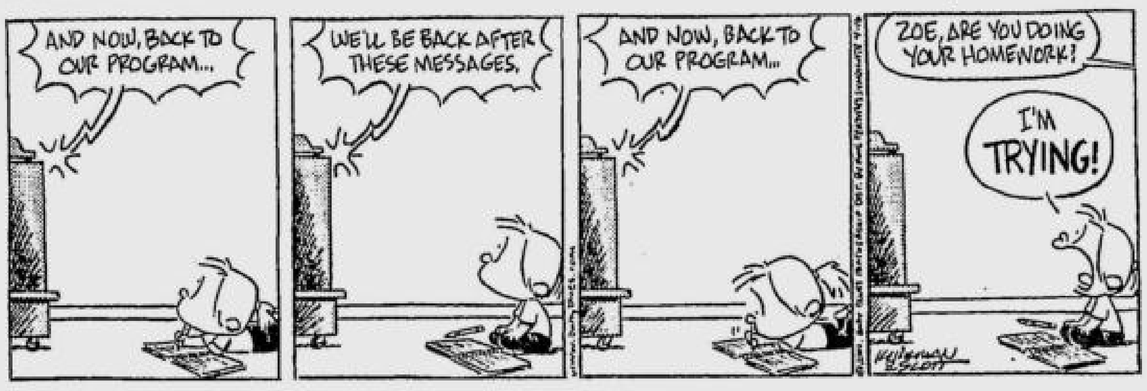
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


AND NOW, BACK TO OUR PROGRAM...
WE'LL BE BACK AFTER THESE MESSAGES.
AND NOW, BACK TO OUR PROGRAM...
ZOE, ARE YOU DOING YOUR HOMEWORK?
I'M TRYING!

HOROSCOPE

BY EUGENIA LAST

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Gabriella Sabatini, Henry Mancini, Bobby Vinton, Charlie Chaplin

Happy Birthday: You will be actively seeking love relationships and business partnerships. You will have a great need to help the underdog this year and will contribute willingly to organizations you believe in. The connections you make through the groups you join will be beneficial to you. Your numbers are 6, 17, 21, 25, 32, 38

ARIES (March 21-April 19): You will be talkative, charming and certainly know how to work a crowd today. Travel and social gatherings will be conducive to meeting new friends.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Your focus will be on work and money. Professional changes that take place today will be favorable to your future. Your ability to get things done will lead to greater responsibility.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): You may find it difficult to express yourself at an emotional level. You will have some wonderful creative ideas that should help you accomplish something that you have a passion for.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): You may feel a little restricted today if you haven't done all the necessary paperwork. Don't allow someone to become a burden. Give him or her suggestions and move on.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): You will be intent on doing something to better mankind. You can form new partnerships or ask for favors today. The future looks bright as long as you take advantage of options available.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): You may have opportunities at work but if you are too wrapped up in a personal dilemma you will miss out. Try to separate your job from your home life today for best results.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): The more you interact with others the better equipped you will become to deal with anything and anyone. You will be a quick learner today so take advantage of your keen mind and do a lot of reading.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): You should be checking out any investment opportunity that comes your way. You may be feeling a little sluggish but if you get enough rest and eat properly it shouldn't slow you down that much.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): You will experience sudden changes regarding friendships and relationships today. Your changing attitude may not sit well with others, however, keep in mind that it's you that you have to please.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): You will be experiencing a change of heart regarding your professional direction due to unsettling occurrences. Don't despair; as long as you work hard you will be in a secure position.

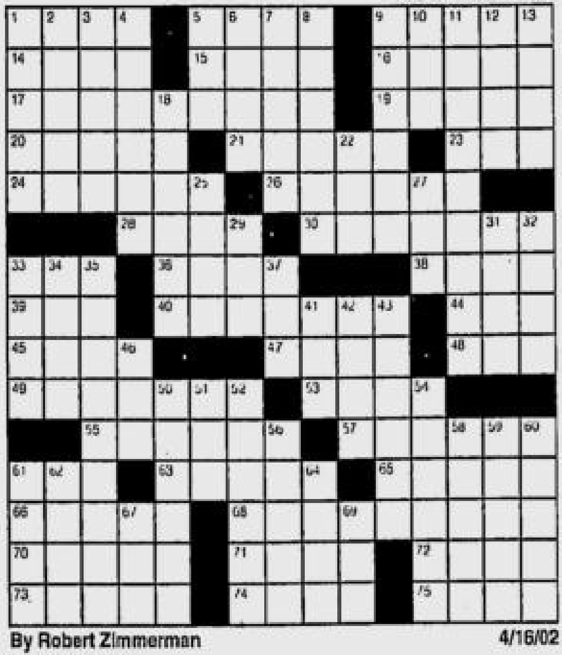
AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): You may feel limited due to children or older relatives today. Don't let your frustrations lead you to overspend. Instead, put your creative talent to work.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Difficulties at a personal level are evident. Try to handle the situation with compassion. An older relative may need to lean on you a little. Your help will be rewarded.

Birthday Baby: You will have all sorts of great ideas and will be eager to share your thoughts with others. Your genuine desire to interact with others will lead to your popularity. You will be dynamic, outgoing and interested in a vast array of subjects.

DAILY CROSSWORD

TMSPuzzles@aol.com



By Robert Zimmerman
San Diego, CA

4/16/02

ACROSS
1 Dateless
5 Once, once
9 Leg-up
14 Himalayan VIP
15 Mugging defense
16 Playwright Rice
17 Mediator
19 Actress Adoree
20 Tommyrot!
21 Fancy feather
23 DDE
24 Raglan or dolman
26 Manufactured home
28 Soil
30 Put in another's care
33 Yoko
36 Arrange one over another
38 Russian ruler
39 Dawber or Tillis
40 South Pacific area
44 Down Under bird
45 Prepare copy
47 Valhalla VIPs
48 Match a raise
49 Bicuspids' neighbors
53 "The Truman Show" director
55 Eyelike
57 Aviator Earhart
61 Personal pronoun
63 '50s candidate Stevenson
65 Buck of country music
66 Burning desire
68 Eat-anything types
70 Artifact
71 "Cheers" barfly
72 Strong cord
73 Sir Arthur Conan __
74 Clipped-off piece
75 Models in parts

DOWN
1 Messy eaters
2 Sri Lankan people
3 Stroll
4 Measured
5 Ambulance grp.
6 Access road
7 Resell tickets
8 Faculty status
9 Grief-stricken
10 Corrida cheer
11 Anthologies
12 Dig for
13 Shoe shaper
18 Danny of "Taxi"
22 Adult males
25 Comic Idle
27 Creative skill
29 Pipe junction
31 Ditto
32 Arnold movie, "__ Lies"
33 Well-fixed group?
34 Nothing in Nogales
35 With menace
37 Waste cloth
41 Equality grp.
42 Novel thought
43 Author of "The Gods Themselves"
46 Twitch
50 Subtle meaning
51 Yore
52 Permanent places?
54 Make over
56 Actor Novarro
58 The king of France
59 Bungling
60 Donkeys
61 Unit of length
62 Cookie choice
64 Inscription on the cross
67 Lubricant
69 Mischievous child

Monday's Puzzle Solved

G	E	O	D	E	■	I	T	E	M	■	A	D	E	N
A	L	L	A	Y	■	N	A	M	E	■	N	O	T	E
G	L	A	Z	E	D	D	O	U	G	H	N	U	T	S
S	A	F	E	T	I	E	S	■	■	A	U	R	A	S
■	■	■	D	O	L	E	■	L	U	L	L	■	■	■
C	A	P	■	O	L	D	W	E	S	T	■	S	E	T
A	L	L	O	T	■	■	H	O	E	■	O	K	R	A
P	E	A	C	H	E	S	A	N	D	C	R	E	A	M
R	U	N	T	■	L	I	L	■	■	O	B	E	S	E
A	T	F	■	L	I	N	E	M	E	N	■	T	E	D
■	■	■	E	A	S	E	■	I	N	C	A	■	■	■
T	O	A	D	S	■	■	A	N	T	E	D	A	T	E
E	G	G	S	S	U	N	N	Y	S	I	D	E	U	P
C	L	U	E	■	M	A	T	A	■	V	E	R	G	E
H	E	E	L	■	S	H	I	N	■	E	R	O	S	E

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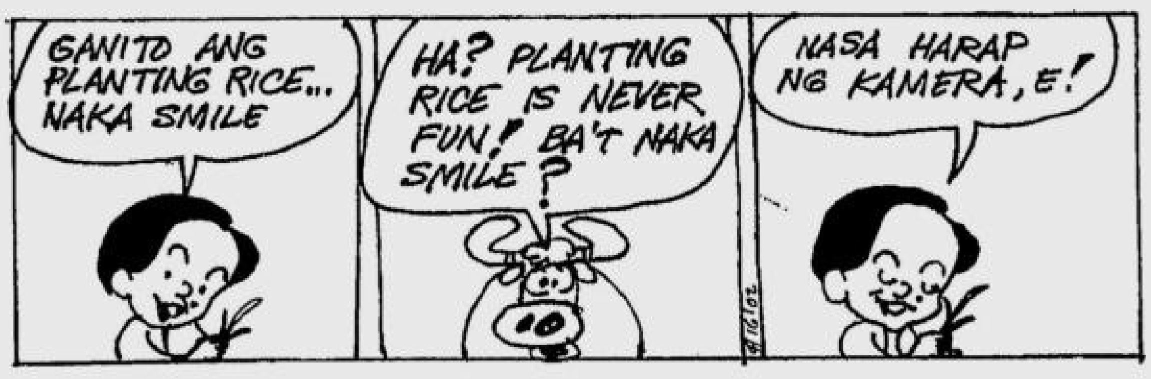
4/16/02

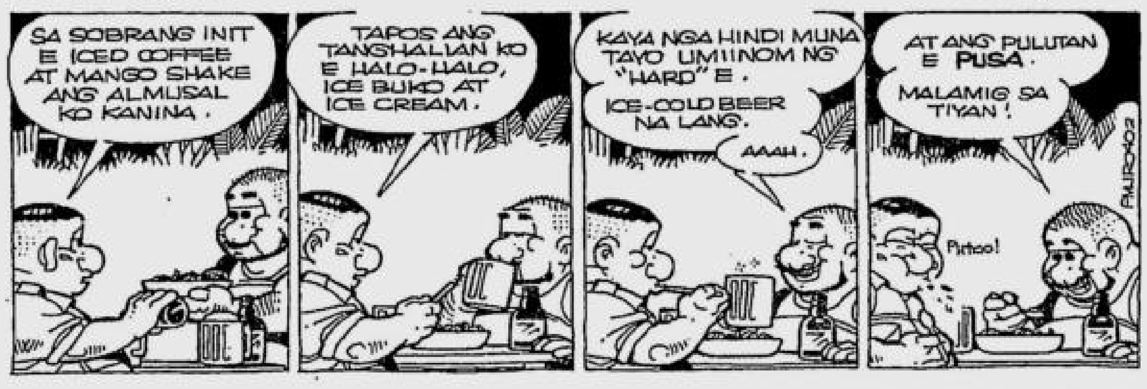
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


GANITO ANG PLANTING RICE... NAKA SMILE
HA? PLANTING RICE IS NEVER FUN! BA'T NAKA SMILE?
NASA HARAP NG KAMERA, E!
4/16/02

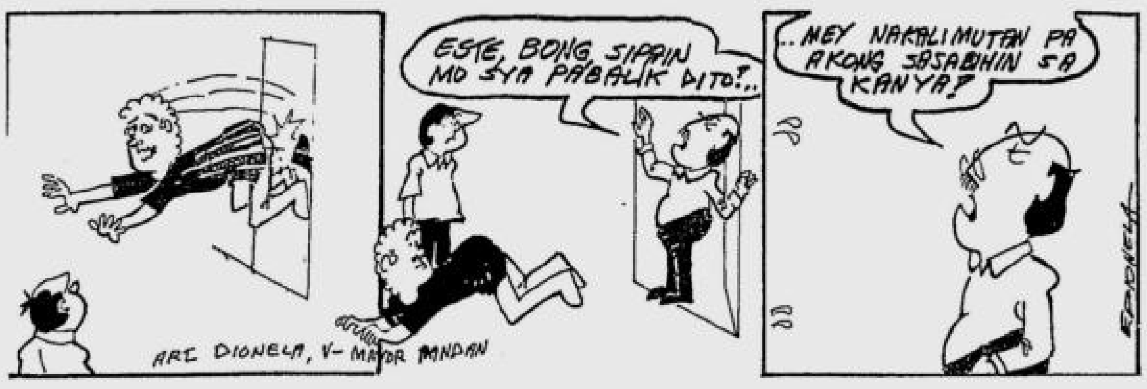
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


SA SOBRANG INIT E ICED COFFEE AT MANGO SHAKE ANG ALMUSAL KO KANINA.
TAPOS ANG TANGHALIAN KO E HALO-HALO, ICE BUKO AT ICE CREAM.
KAYA NGA HINDI MUNA TAYO UMIINOM NG "HARD" E.
ICE-COLD BEER NA LANG.
AAAH.
AT ANG PULUTAN E PUSA.
MALAMIG SA TIYAN!
Pirtoo!
PMJR0402

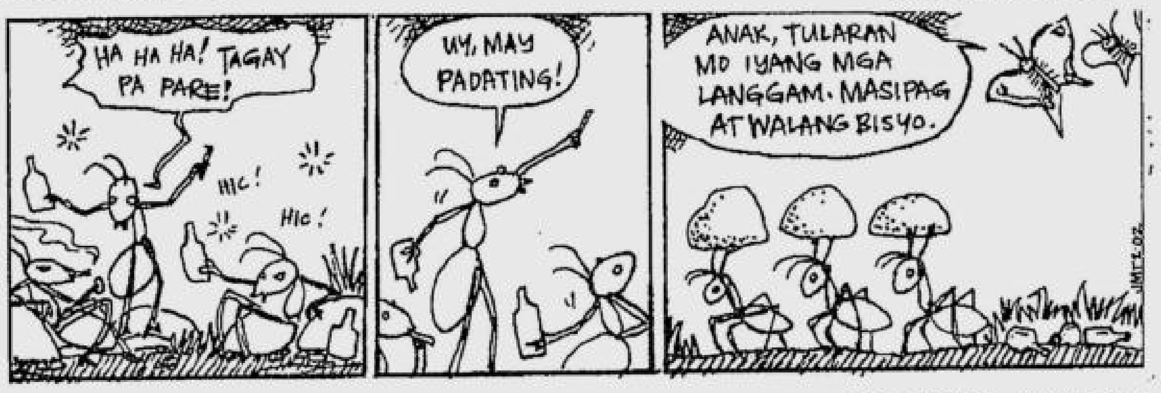
SIMO

BY EDGAR DIONELA


ESTE, BONG, SIPAIN MO SYA PABALIK DITO!..
..MEY NAKALIMUTAN PA AKONG SASABIHIN SA KANYA!
ART DIONELA, V-MAYOR PANDAN
EDIONELA

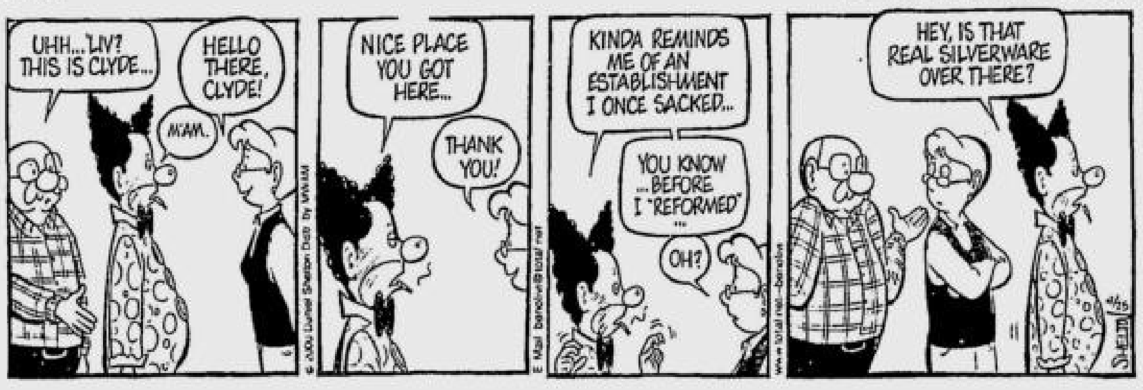
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


HA HA HA! TAGAY PA PARE!
HIC!
HIC!
UY, MAY PADATING!
ANAK, TULARAN MO IYANG MGA LANGGAM. MASIPAG AT WALANG BISYO.

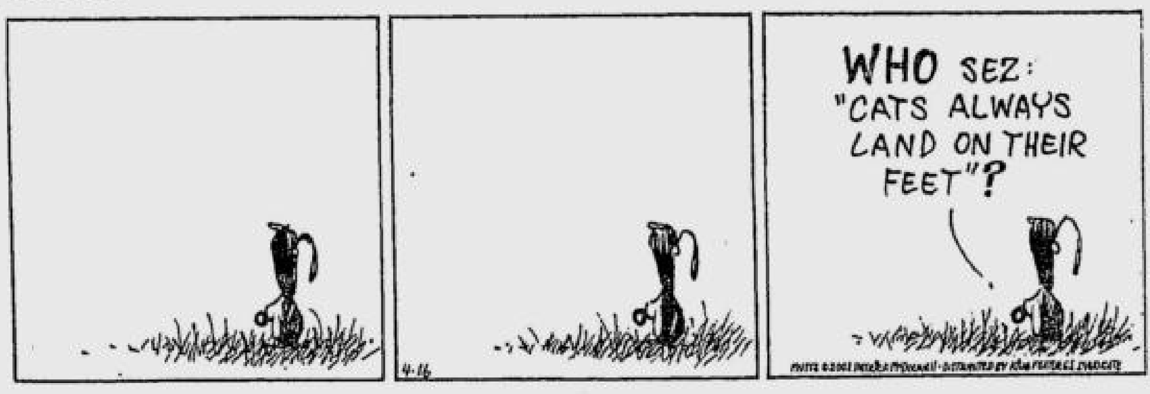
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


UHH...LIV? THIS IS CLYDE...
HELLO THERE, CLYDE!
M'AM.
NICE PLACE YOU GOT HERE...
THANK YOU!
KINDA REMINDS ME OF AN ESTABLISHMENT I ONCE SACKED...
YOU KNOW ...BEFORE I "REFORMED"
OH?
HEY, IS THAT REAL SILVERWARE OVER THERE?

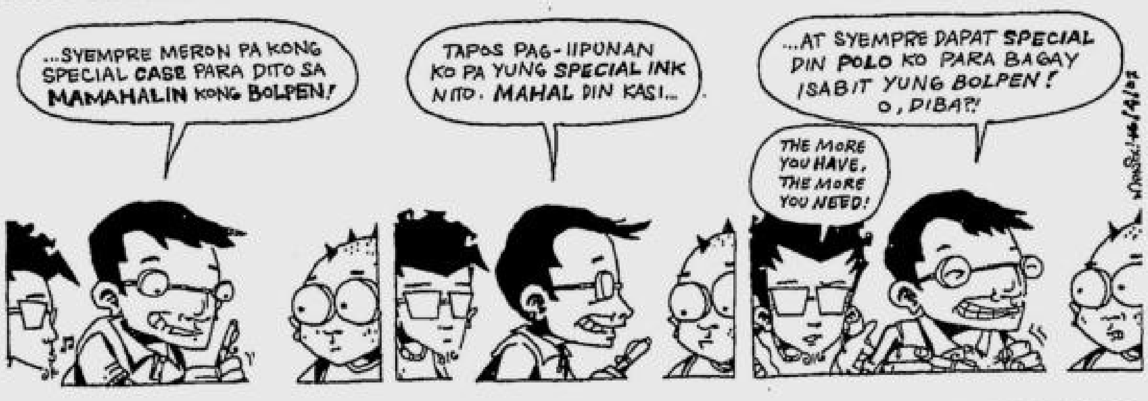
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


4-16
WHO SEZ: "CATS ALWAYS LAND ON THEIR FEET"?

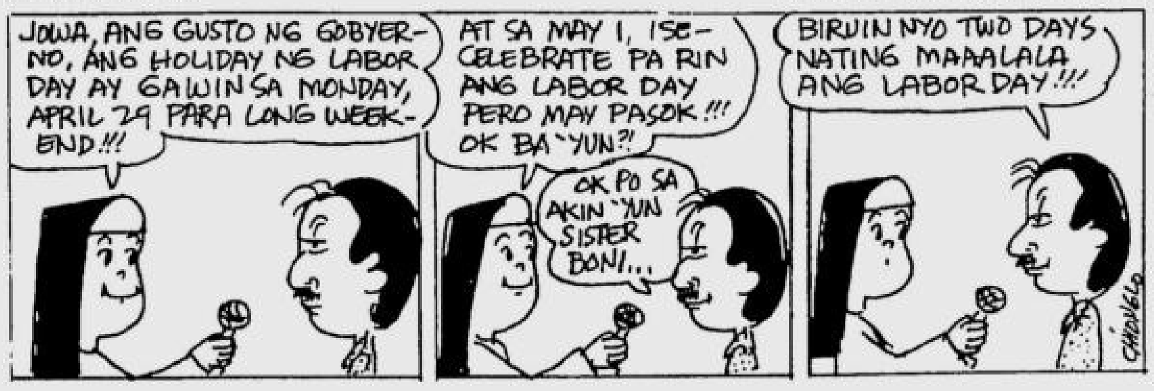
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


...SYEMPRE MERON PA KONG SPECIAL CASE PARA DITO SA MAMAHALIN KONG BOLPEN!
TAPOS PAG-IIPUNAN KO PA YUNG SPECIAL INK NITO. MAHAL DIN KASI...
...AT SYEMPRE DAPAT SPECIAL DIN POLO KO PARA BAGAY ISABIT YUNG BOLPEN! O, DIBA?!
THE MORE YOU HAVE, THE MORE YOU NEED!

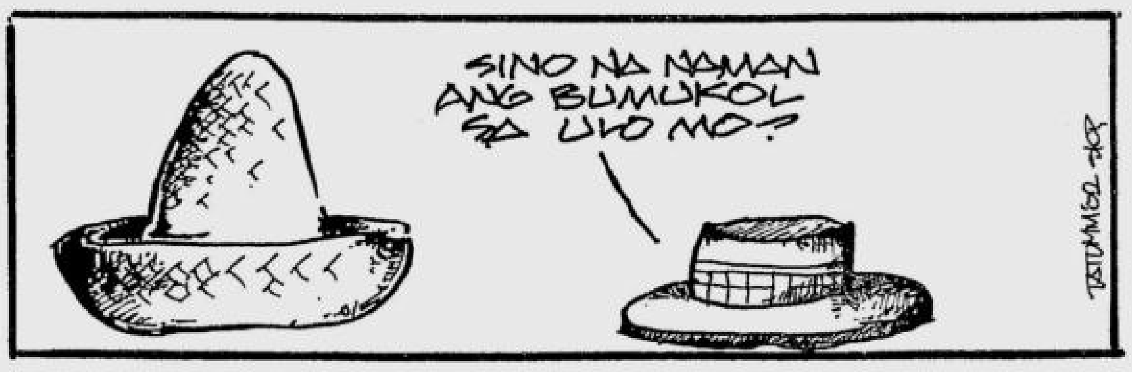
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


JOWA, ANG GUSTO NG GOBYERNO, ANG HOLIDAY NG LABOR DAY AY GAWIN SA MONDAY, APRIL 29 PARA LONG WEEK-END!!!
AT SA MAY 1, ISE-CELEBRATE PA RIN ANG LABOR DAY PERO MAY PASOK!!! OK BA 'YUN?!
OK PO SA AKIN 'YUN SISTER BONI...
BIRUIN NYO TWO DAYS NATING MAAALALA ANG LABOR DAY!!!
CHIONGLO

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


SINO NA NAMAN ANG BUMUKOL SA ULO MO?

ENTERTAINMENT

Editor **Louie C. Camino**

'Star Wars' fans start lining up

LOS ANGELES — Around 70 hardcore fans of the "Star Wars" film series have begun lining up in Hollywood to see the next episode six weeks ahead of the movie's opening.

The fans camping out in shifts outside Tinseltown's historic Grauman's Chinese Theater day and night to ensure they get the first tickets to the May 16 opening of "Star Wars: Episode II — Attack of the Clones."

"I came here to make sure that I'm in that first theater full of people to see the film at its first midnight showing with this crowd — this is the crowd to see it with," said 29-year-old martial arts instructor Luis Lecca.

The "crowd," who began queuing up a week ago, are staging an epic sit-in on the pavements near the Hollywood cinema where the first "Star Wars" movie premiered in 1977, was mobilized by website "liningup.com."

Equipped with tents, sleeping bags, rucksacks, electronic games, snacks and college textbooks, the group are taking turns keeping their places in the line for the box office, which opens about two weeks before the film's debut.

With up to 20 people "lining up" on an assortment of deck chairs on Hollywood's bustling Walk of Fame at any one time, each participant logs their hours and the person who has spent the most time there will get to buy the first ticket.

The "Star Wars" camp out has become something of a tradition for fans. The films themselves have become cult classics with an avid global following. A similar stake-out was launched for the last episode in 1999.

"I'm a huge fan and lined up right here for the last film three years ago," said fine arts student Justin Sewell, 21.

"Its a whole experience and you get to meet great people from all over the world, with different cultures and backgrounds but all with one thing in common — a passion for "Star Wars."

The gang, using shop toilets and taking movies and meals in nearby restaurants and cinemas when not in line, spend most of their time talking about "Star Wars," although Sewell says the conversation becomes more prosaic and linked to creature comforts as the vigil progresses.

"Some people think we are weird and make comments like 'why don't you get a life,' but mostly people recognize that we're having fun and enjoying a real hobby," Lecca said. *AFP*

'Survivor' allowed to shoot in Thailand

BANGKOK — Thailand has given the green light for the next series of the smash-hit reality-TV program "Survivor" to be shot on a remote island in the kingdom's south, authorities said.

The Thailand Film Office (TFO) said it had approved filming on pristine Tarutao island, which lies near the Malaysian sea border, despite its status as a nature preserve.

"It was a unanimous decision to allow Survivor to shoot on Tarutao because we are confident it poses no threat to the environment or the people," TFO director Sidhichai Jayant said after a meeting of the TFO, tourism officials and government authorities.

Tarutao, located within a national marine park some 1,000 kilometres (625) south of Bangkok, boasts caves, waterfalls and white-sand beaches, and protected wildlife including dolphins and dugongs.

But until being selected by the Survivor team after a survey of several of the nation's famed tropical destinations, it was best known for being used as a jail for political prisoners during World War II.

The 16 contestants, who must survive a series of grueling challenges to win a million-dollar pot, are unlikely to run across any tourists as few boats travel to Tarutao and facilities are rudimentary.

Sidhichai said the US show producers' "positive record" was taken into consideration when officials approved the 40-day shoot which is expected to begin in July.

"They have already shot in French Polynesia, Australia and Borneo, and there were no problems. The programmes were ecologically friendly," he told AFP.

Shoot plans quickly ran up against fears of a repeat of the massive controversy surrounding filming in Thailand of the Hollywood dud "The Beach", starring Leonardo DiCaprio.

The movie's producers were accused of damaging the ecology of a national park on famed Phi Phi Island, and are to be hauled back into court next month over the allegations.

Sensitive to similar potential fallout over Survivor, Thai authorities plan to invite some 10 non-governmental workers and local government officials to observe filming on Tarutao, Sidhichai said.

They will allow just 16 game participants, plus camera teams, to stay in the island's rain forest, while the rest of 100-person crew will be required to stay in Royal Forestry Department bungalows on a nearby island. *AFP*

New films on view this month

VIEWFINDE

Nestor U. Torre

tWHAT movies can we get to see this month? Here are some interesting prospects:

"Showtime" with **Robert De Niro, Eddie Murphy** and **Rene Russo**. When a no-nonsense LAPD detective (De Niro) is forced to costar on a reality-based TV show with a frustrated actor-turned-cop (Murphy). Specifically, they have their hands full trying to cope with the show's powerhouse producer (Russo) and her intrusive camera crew.

"Return to Never Land." An animated feature in which Jane, the eldest of Wendy's two children, is mistakenly kidnapped by Captain Hook and whisked off to Never Land, where she meets the forever childlike Peter Pan, one generation after he got to know her mother.

The unexpected trip to Peter Pan's world of imagination scares Jane at first, but she's soon grateful for the way that it's brought happiness and a sense of wonder back to her sad, little heart.

"K-Pak" with **Kevin Spacey** and **Jeff Bridges**. In this tale about friendship and madness, Spacey plays a seemingly delusional man who claims to be a visitor of outer space. Bridges plays his psychiatrist, and the two topnotch actors share a number of compelling scenes that help make this movie better than its material.

"Hart's War" with **Bruce Willis** and **Colin Farcell**. An American prisoner of war (Farrell) who used to be a law student at Yale is assigned as the defense lawyer at a court martial that may have been rigged by the camp's ranking American officer (Willis).

"Death to Smoochy" with **Robin Williams** playing Rainbow Randolph, the costumed host of a popular kiddie show on TV who is fired as a result of a bribery scandal. He is replaced by Smoochy, a fuschia rhinoceros (**Edward Norton**). When Randolph learns that Smoochy is having an affair with his former girlfriend, he plots his revenge.

"The Scorpion King." Five thousand years ago in Gomorrah, an evil ruler is bent on killing the nomads in the desert. Since he relies on a sorcerer, they hire an assassin (**The Rock**) to kill the visionary.

Discovery channel

NOW that SkyCable no longer carries the National Geographic Channel and some other cable treats, we find ourselves watching the Discovery Channel more often than most of the other stations.

The reason is the fact that the channel offers in-depth documentaries and features on a wide range of topics and issues, so viewers rarely get bored.

If you haven't patronized the Discovery Channel before, why don't you give it a try? You might get to really like and appreciate it, as we have.

NAMCYA Summer Music Workshop

NAMCYA, the Music Competition for Young Artists Foundation, will hold its 2002 Summer Music Workshop from April 21 to 27 at Villa La Maja Hotel in Baguio City. The workshop aims to upgrade the skills of trainers, coaches and conductors, and help music teachers acquire more effective methods of music education.

This year's theme "Rethinking Music: An Integrated Course in Musicianship." Instructors includes Taiwanese choral conductor Prof. **Chyi-Lin Hong, Josefino Toledo, Ramon Santos, Eudenice Palaruan, Verne de la Peña** and **Leticia del Valle** (also the workshop director).

Participants will earn three academic units from the University of Baguio. Call 551-5091 by April 15.

Keep it on

THE SUCCESS in the bold film genre of nubile stars like **Assunta de Rossi, Ara Mina, Rica Peralejo** and **Joyce Jimenez** has prompted other heretofore "wholesome" actresses to also dare to bare in their forthcoming starrers.

On the other hand, veteran sexy performers like **Ina Raymundo** and **Klaudia Koronel** have decided to keep their clothes on, and focus more on their acting ability than on their epidermal and pneumatic attributes.

Which way to go? We trust that more young actresses will decide to act rather than strip, for the simple reason that moviegoers have gotten sated and jaded when it comes to bold films. They've already seen everything, so nothing thrills them anymore.

That's why some really hot movies are failing to draw the usual droves of voyeurs these days, and their new leading ladies don't know what hit them. they decided to go bold to become big stars, but that hasn't happened. So, ladies, keep your clothes on and work on your acting talent instead! It'll serve you better in the long run.

Joey: I don't know who owns the house where Alma lives

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Anne Carvajal

THE FUNNY thing about most celebrities is that most of them don't bother to thank press people who write favorable items about them. Once you come up with a negative piece, they are quick to call your attention.

When stars react to items I've written about them, I just hear them out. I can tell if they are just being defensive or are trying to downplay the issue. If they want to make a fool of themselves, I let them. They can keep lying to the press and to the public but they can't keep on lying to themselves.

That's why I wasn't a bit surprised when Mayor **Joey Marquez** texted me about the item I wrote in my previous column where I said he has reconciled with **Alma Moreno**. "We will never ever get back together but we remain friends," said the mayor.

But what Joey strongly reacted to was my implying that he owned the house Alma is renting and that it was a gift of a businesswoman whose business he allowed in Parañaque. He said, "I do not know who owns that house but I can have the records checked."

No need to go to such extreme measures, Mayor. If your conscience is clear, just let the issue slide. But my well-placed source even gave me the name of the businesswoman and her company.

In connection with the issue, I'd like to share with you this e-mail from a reader.

"Dear Ms Carvajal,

"I hope you realize that when you stated in your article (Dollywood, April 11, 2002) that a source mentioned to you that 'the house that Alma claimed she was renting for P45,000 a month when they parted ways is actually Joey's house which was given to him by a Chinese businesswoman for letting her business operate in Paranaque,' you are directly implying that this house was a bribe to Joey for allowing the business to operate. Let me remind you that accepting gifts beyond a certain amount . . . by a government official from an individual whose business relies on the approval of the same government official or his office can and most likely will be construed as a possible bribe.

"If your intention was to bring a possible case of corruption to light, I applaud you on your subtlety. Rest assured that I am not the only one who will pick up on this. If, however, this was merely a poorly worded phrase in your column, then I'm afraid this carelessness may have effects far beyond the announcement of a joyous, if not suspicious, reunion of two potential political rivals."

—Jaime G.

Vandolph sees love child

IT'S been exactly a year since I came out with the scoop about Vandolph's lovechild **Gabrielle** with **Guia Avante**. All that the Avantes wanted was for him to sign Gabrielle's birth certificate, nothing more, nothing less.

For the longest time, their plea fell on deaf ears. Vandolph's family chose to remain mum about the issue. I never stopped crusading for the Avantes and my *hijada* Gabrielle.

The Avantes' unwavering faith in God saw them through. When Vandolph figured in an almost-fatal vehicular accident, I wrote that hopefully he would make Gabrielle even a teeny-weeny part of his second lease on life. Now that he has miraculously recovered, it must have finally hit Vandolph that he must accept, acknowledge and appreciate the existence of his lovechild.

The Avantes were overjoyed to tell me that he regularly visits Gabrielle and even his mom Alma came to fetch the baby and took her to the birthday party of her adopted child.

I take my hats off to Vandolph for being man enough to stand by Gabrielle. I'm sure that when she grows up, she will thank him for not depriving her of the joy of having a father around.

I say that with a tinge of sadness because I'm perpetually seeking a "father figure." Sometimes when there are no heroes, we tend to create one. That's probably why I always end up being disillusioned in love. As they say, there are no illegitimate children, only illegitimate parents.

For feeback, e-mail luvludg@hotmail.com, friends_at_dsquare@yahoo.com, wateringhole2000@yahoo.com

RITCHIE Bingcang, Mossimo Bikini finalist

Mossimo Bikini Summit peaks in Boracay finals

TWELVE shapely women and 12 buff men are competing for the top prizes in the Mossimo Bikini Summit that culminates in "The Boracay Bikini Championship at the Pearl of the Pacific in Boracay on Saturdayn April 20.

The official candidates of the Mossimo Bikini Summit were presented to the media last April 8. Chosen from hundreds who joined the screening, they are Alex Lee, Douglas Robinson, Mark Hernandez, Jordan Hermogenes, Mark Lowie Lopez, Denny Ngo, Randolf Stamatelaky, Gabby Torente, Bing Victoria, Warty Agalut, Carlo Maceda, and Edward Mendez; and Elaine Suizo, Susan Ocson, Charish Fajardo, Ritchie Bingcang, Linda Maria Beehler, Bernadette Camanag, Paula Joy Cusipag, Edilyn Santillan, Danika Joy Murphy, Sarah Jane Gomez, April Tanhueco, and Josephine Castillo.

They were chosen in a series of elimination rounds held on four consecutive nights at the Hard Rock Café in Makati, 8th Day in Ortigas, and Famous Mikes and Culture Club, both in Libis.

The Pearl Manila Hotel hosted the April 8 press presentation, a mini-fashion show and sneak preview of the finals night in Boracay.

Former Bb Pilipinas-Universe Nina Ricci Alagao, who also emceed the press presentation, TV host Manny Distor and Filipino-Australian ramp and commercial model Geoffrey Briz are the hosts on finals night at the beachfront of Boracay's Pearl of the Pacific Resort.

Aside from a shot at a modeling career, first prize winners will each get P30,000 in cash plus gift packages and a one-year contract with Viva Films. Second prize winners will get P20,000 and third prize winners P10,000, plus gift packages.

The Mossimo Bikini Summit is presented by Mossimo and the Pearl of the Pacific Resort, co-presented by Air Philippines, Manila Bulletin, Block and White Skin Whitening Lotion, Master Facial Cleanser and Eskinol Facial Cleanser.

Sponsors are The Pearl Manila Hotel and Atrium Hotel, Compass Internet, Summit Natural Drinking Water Inc., Eye Magazine, Mossimo AXS, Mossimo Vision, Long Stem and Viva Films. Photography is by Photoworks by Roy Nabong.

You can vote for your favorite candidates by visiting *www.mossimobikinisummit.compass.com.ph*.

The Mossimo Bikini Summit is a production of Cast & Crew and will be directed for stage by Duds Santiago and Calvin Neria for TV. The finals will be shown on ABC 5 on May 27.

JORDAN Hermogenes, Mossimo Bikini finalist

City Lite summer sizzlers

CITY LITE 88.3, Manila's smooth jazz radio, fills the summer with parties, concerts and music.

City Lite 88.3 pairs up once again with Prince of Jazz Richard Merk for another evening of classic and contemporary jazz at Gillespie's at Edsa Shangri-La Hotel on April 23. The night is another edition of City Jazz Lounge.

Coming to you live on April 24 is the City Lite Party Nights Out bar tour at the Hard Rock Café. The Smooth Jazz Radio will feature Q&A, one of Metro Manila's premier show bands whose repertoire includes the station's smoothest tunes plus music to groove by the whole night long.

Then comes the ultimate out-of-time celebration, complete with a party overflowing with eats, booze and tunes from top show bands on the powder-fine sand under the moonlight on Boracay in "A Full Moon Party."

RICHARD MERK

SM CINEMA

SM Dial-A-Movie Tel. 633-9999

NOW SHOWING

SM CITY BACOOR
4173869

1	S2PID LUV
2	ICE AGE
3	SHOWTIME
4	BLADE 2
5	HART'S WAR
6	S2PID LUV
7	E.T.
8	TIME MACHINE

SM CENTERPOINT
7149522 -7161416

1	S2PID LUV
2	HART'S WAR
3	SHOWTIME
4	BLOW DRY
5	BLADE 2
6	HARI NG SELDA
7	E.T.
8	ICE AGE
9	MIMIC 2
10	MONTE CRISTO

SM CITY FAIRVIEW
9350749

1	CROSSROADS
2	MONTE CRISTO
3	SHOWTIME
4	HART'S WAR
5	E.T.
6	S2PID LUV
7	ICE AGE
8	BLADE 2
9	MIMIC 2
10	TIME MACHINE
11	GOT 2 BELIEVE
12	S2PID LUV

SM CITY MANILA
5239240

1	SHOWTIME
2	ICE AGE
3	BLOW DRY
4	HART'S WAR
5	MONTE CRISTO
6	E.T.
7	MIMIC 2
8	CROSSROADS
9	S2PID LUV
10	S2PID LUV
11	TIME MACHINE
12	BLADE 2

SM MEGAMALL
6331901 • 6329401

1	CROSSROADS
2	HART'S WAR
3	SHOWTIME
4	BLADE 2
5	ICE AGE
6	MIMIC 2
7	GOT 2 BELIEVE
8	TIME MACHINE
9	S2PID LUV
10	MONTE CRISTO
11	S2PID LUV
12	E.T.

SM CITY NORTH EDSA
9295452

1	ICE AGE
2	BLADE 2
3	S2PID LUV
4	E.T.
5	MONTE CRISTO
6	HART'S WAR
7	SHOWTIME
8	MIMIC 2
9	CLOSED
10	CLOSED
11	CLOSED
12	CLOSED

SM SOUTHMALL
8066888

1	BLOW DRY
2	ICE AGE
3	HART'S WAR
4	SHOWTIME
5	MONTE CRISTO
6	TIME MACHINE
7	S2PID LUV
8	BLADE 2
9	E.T.
10	MIMIC 2

SM CITY CEBU
2313876

1	JOHN Q
2	QUEEN OF THE DAMNED
3	WE WERE SOLDIERS
4	ICE AGE
5	GOT 2 BELIEVE
6	E.T.
7	S2PID LUV
8	MONTE CRISTO

SM CITY ILOILO
3209422

1	JOHN Q
2	CLOSED
3	ICE AGE
4	MONTE CRISTO
5	S2PID LUV
6	QUEEN OF THE DAMNED
7	CLOSED
8	GOT 2 BELIEVE

SM CITY PAMPANGA
7128015

1	BLADE 2
2	E.T.
3	BANDITS
4	ICE AGE
5	MAJESTIC
6	S2PID LUV

SM SUPER CTR. SUCAT
8294975

1	HART'S WAR
2	E.T.
3	S2PID LUV
4	SHOWTIME

SM CINEMA GUADALUPE
8820984

1	IKA-7 GLORYA
2	HART'S WAR
3	S2PID LUV

SM CINEMA TUTUBAN
2514302

1	HART'S WAR
2	SHOWTIME
3	S2PID LUV
4	HARI NG SELDA

SM CITY DAVAO
2976998

1	WE WERE SOLDIERS
2	S2PID LUV
3	E.T.
4	SNAKE CHARMER
5	ICE AGE
6	QUEEN OF THE DAMNED

SM BICUTAN

1
2
3
4

SOON TO OPEN!
4 NEW
STATE-OF-THE-ART
VISION & SOUND

SM CITY CAGAYAN DE ORO

1
2
3
4

SOON TO OPEN!
4 NEW
STATE-OF-THE-ART
VISION & SOUND

THE PODIUM

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1
2

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2 NEW STATE-OF-THE-ART VISION & SOUND

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1 S2PID LUV	1 ICE AGE	4 BLOW DRY	1 BEFORE NIGHT FALLS	1 SHOWTIME THX
2 HART'S WAR	2 E.T.	5 MIMIC 2	2 HART'S WAR	2 HART'S WAR
3 BLADE 2	3 HART'S WAR THX 12:30 pm, 3:00, 5:30, 8:00, 10:30 GUARANTEED SEATS	6 SHOWTIME	3 SHOWTIME	3 ICE AGE
4 SHOWTIME		7 COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO	4 Onstage LANI ON SATGE APRIL 19, 20, 26 & 27 9:00 PM	4 E.T.
				5 COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO

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METRO MANILA THEATERS ASSOCIATION

MOVIE GUIDE

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Filinvest FESTIVAL CINEMA
(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72

1 (DDS)	BLADE 2
2 (SDDS)	TIME MACHINE
3 (DTS)	ICE AGE
4 GOLD (DTS)	SHOWTIME
5 GOLD (DOLBY)	HART'S WAR
6 GOLD (SDDS)	COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO
7 GOLD (DOLBY)	E.T.
8	S2PID LUV
9	MIMIC 2
10	CROSSROADS

Pearl Plaza Cinemas
(Parañaque) tel. 853.4486

1	
2	
3 (DTS)	SHOWTIME
4	
5	
6 (DTS)	TIME MACHINE
Golden Pearl THX	

Masagana CINEMA
(Pasay) tel 833.3274

1	S2PID LUV
2	SHOWTIME
3	ITLOG

starmall Movies
(Shaw Blvd.) tel 724.4986

1	S2PID LUV
2	SHOWTIME
3	HARI NG SELDA
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	HART'S WAR
5	CROSS ROADS

METROPOLIS star
tel 850.4285

1	HARI NG SELDA
2	ITLOG
3	S2PID LUV
4	HARTS WAR
5	SHOWTIME
6	E.T.
7	
8	

PREMIERE CINEMA THX
(Makati City) TEL. 751-2010 TO 13

1	SHOWTIME

Center Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007

1	HARI NG SELDA
2	

FCM FAIRVIEW CENTER MALL, INC.
tel 930.9515

1	
2	IKA-7 GLORYA
3	

Spring
(Libertad, Pasay City) tel 831.7864

1	ITLOG
A	SHOWTIME

Sunshine
(FTI, Taguig) tel 838.4301 loc. 3376

1	HARTS WAR
2	S2PID LUV
3	
4	HARI NG SELDA

GOTESCO CINEMA

Gotesco City
(Manila) tel 734.8588

1 (DOLBY)	HARTS WAR
2	
3	
4	COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO
5	HARI NG SELDA
6	S2PID LUV
7 (DTS)	SHOWTIME
8 (SDDS)	BLADE 2
9 (DOLBY)	BLOW DRY

Gotesco Caloocan
tel 362.3508

2	S2PID LUV

Gotesco Grand Central
(Caloocan) tel 364.3781

1	S2PID LUV
2	S2PID LUV
3	HARI NG SELDA
4 (SDDS)	HARTS WAR
5	ITLOG
6 (DOLBY)	BLADE 2
7 (DTS)	SHOWTIME
8	ICE AGE
9	TIME MACHINE

Gotesco Commonwealth
tel 951.0083

1 (DTS)	SHOWTIME
2	HARI NG SELDA
3	RESERVE
4	ICE AGE
5 (SDDS)	COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO
6	S2PID LUV
7 (DOLBY)	BLADE 2
8	RESERVE

Gotesco Ortigas
tel 656.6795

1	S2PID LUV
2	BLADE 2
3 (DTS)	SHOWTIME
4	HARI NG SELDA
5 (SDDS)	HARTS WAR

Universal
(Manila) tel 733.2470

1	S2PID LUV

Sampaguita
(Cubao) tel 911.7888

1	S2PID LUV

Dilson
(Manila) tel 734.7724

Dilson
Lords
Jennet

MARKETPLACE Mandaluyong
tel 533.3851 / 533.3856

1	S2PID LUV
2	SHOWTIME
3	HARI NG SELDA

Prima
(Pasig) tel 641.1215

3	

Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto
SUPER CINERAMA
tel 733.4238

1 (DOLBY)	HARTS WAR
2	SHOWTIME
3	CLOSED
4	S2PID LUV
5	RESERVE

New Divisoria Mall
DIVISORIA CINEMA
tel 244.4619

1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	

FRC Cinema
Talaba Bacoor Cavite

1	GOT 2 BELIEVE
2	

Berma
tel 879.2029

1	S2PID LUV
2	ITLOG

CitiMall
(Parañaque) tel 820.7269

1	
2	

CINEMA 2000

Cinema 2000 Target Mall
(Sta. Rosa Laguna)
tel (049) 534.2185 / 534.2198

1	S2PID LUV
2	BLADE 2
3 (DTS)	QUEEN OF THE DAMNED

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383

1	S2PID LUV
2 (DTS)	QUEEN OF THE DAMNED
3 (DOLBY)	BLADE 2
4	CROSSROADS

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Biñan) tel (049) 411.1146

1	S2PID LUV
2 (DOLBY)	QUEEN OF THE DAMNED
3 (DTS)	CROSSROADS
4	BLADE 2

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771

1	E.T.
2	S2PID LUV
3	SOON TO OPEN
4	SOON TO OPEN

Cinema 2000 MetroTown
(Tarlac) tel(045) 982.1729

1	S2PID LUV
2	MAJESTIC
3 (DOLBY)	WE WERE SOLDIERS
4 (DTS)	E.T.

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276

1 (SDDS)	S2PID LUV
2	HARI NG SELDA
3	ITLOG
4 (DTS)	HART'S WAR

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202

1 (DOLBY)	BLADE 2
2	S2PID LUV
3 (DTS)	QUEEN OF THE DAMNED
4	HARI NG SELDA
5	CROSSROADS

Olivarez Tri-Cinema
(Biñan) tel (049) 511.8883

1	S2PID LUV
2	QUEEN OF THE DAMNED
3	ITLOG

Olivarez Los Baños
tel (049) 249-2558

1	QUEEN OF THE DAMNED
2	S2PID LUV
3	E.T.

Olivarez Tagaytay
tel (046) 413.0311

1	HARI NG SELDA
2	ICE AGE
3	BIBINGKA

Morales Cinema
(Biñan) tel (049) 511.9736

1	S2PID LUV
2	BLADE 2
3	

Cabuyao
(Laguna City) tel (049) 531.4808

1 (DTS)	S2PID LUV
2 (DTS)	RESERVE

Fourstep
(Cavite) tel (046) 416.2385

1	

Emperor
(Rosario Cavite) tel (046) 438.1657

1	ITLOG
2	S2PID LUV
3	HARI NG SELDA

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790

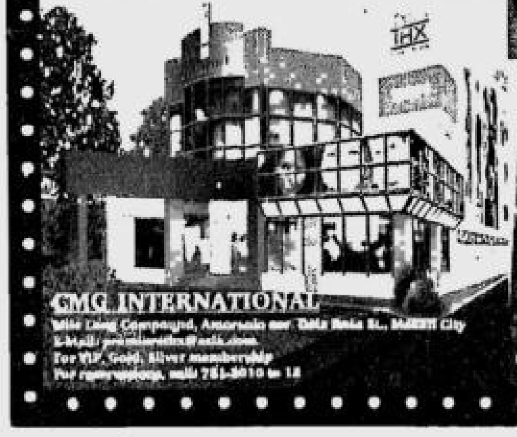
1	ITLOG
2	BEAUTIFUL MIND
3	BANDITS
4	JOHN Q

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03

1 (DOLBY EX)	BLADE 2
2	S2PID LUV
3 (DTS)	MAJESTIC
4	BANDITS

*Movies are subject to change without prior notice

ADVANCED SCREENING THX DOLBY dts SDDS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SHOWTIME

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Galleria
632- 9115- 16
633- 7641 loc. 279

1 THX	BLADE 2
2	ICE AGE
3	HARTS WAR
4	SHOWTIME
5	S2PID LUV
6	MONTE CRISTO
7	BLOW DRY
8	E.T.
9	TIME MACHINE
10	CROSS ROADS

Ermita
536 -7809- 12

1	HARTS WAR
2	E.T.
3	MONTE CRISTO
4	BLADE 2
5	S2PID LUV
6	BLOW DRY
7	SHOWTIME

Metro East -
Marcos hway 682- 8193 / 8280

1	SHOWTIME
2	ICE AGE
3	SHOWTIME
4	E.T.
5	BLADE 2
6	S2PID LUV
7	TIME MACHINE
8	MIMIC 2

Novaliches
935- 3229 - 30

1	HARTS WAR
2	ICE AGE
3	BLOW DRY
4	E.T.
5	BLADE 2
6	TIME MACHINE
7	S2PID LUV
8	SHOWTIME

Imus
471- 8188 / 875- 3838

1	BLADE 2
2	HARTS WAR
3	SHOWTIME
4	E.T.
5	S2PID LUV
6	BLOW DRY

Bacolod
441- 0453 / 0459

1	E.T.
2	JOHN Q
3	HARI NG SELDA
4	GOT 2 BELIEVE
5	MONTE CRISTO
6	WE WERE SOLDIERS

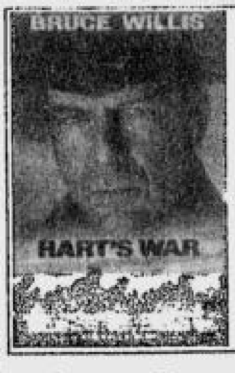
Iloilo
336- 8077 - 78

1	MONTE CRISTO
2	QUEEN OF THE DAMNED
3	JOHN Q
4	SHIPPING NEWS
5	S2PID LUV
6	E.T.

Star Mills-
Sn. Fernando, Pamp. 875- 1927
961-5318 / 5270

1	MAJESTICS
2	BANDITS
3	BLADE 2
4	S2PID LUV
5	E.T.
6	

malabon citisquare-
soon to open.



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Robinsons
Movieworld
Galleria

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http://www.robinsonsmovieworld.com
call-a-movie 536- 7812

MOVIES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.

Star mall happenings liven up April, May

THE Star Group of Malls has lined up happenings to lure more people in the summer of 2002.

At the Metropolis Star in Alabang, Musical Theater Philippines (Musicat) holds Workshop 2002 from April 17 to May 19. Founded by singer Celeste Legaspi and talent manager Girlie Rodis, the workshop includes theater for children, teens and adults, complete with lessons in pop music and dance, props making, set and costume design plus special lectures.

Swimming champion Eric Buhain and the Professional Swimming Coaches Academy of the Philippines hold their second swimming clinic at the Starland Theme Park and Resort in the Metropolis Star. Ongoing until June 17, the swimming clinic will have world-class athletes teaching basic, advance, competitive and novice courses. Call 850-4285 for details.

At Starmall at the corner of Edsa and Shaw Boulevard in Mandaluyong, there are free weekly shows at the Bridgeway in "Music and Laughter" with Loi and Cris every Wednesday, "Stargazing" with Pola Salvador every Friday, and the Videoke Star Challenge every Sunday.

At Mstar Las Piñas, Café.com and Feji Amusement host the Summer Cyber Game, featuring Tekken 3, Confidential Mission, Marvelous Super Heroes, SF Champion Edition and Counter Strike, on April 27. Vision Creation hosts the Summer Shootout on April 20.

The Mstar Voice Quest is held every Sunday, with the finals happening on May 5. Call 872-5249 for details.

THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

ARANETA CENTER THEATERS, 911-3101	
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-1	S2PID LUV
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-2	HARI NG SELDA
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-3 (DDS)	BLADE 2
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-4 (SDDS)	HART'S WAR
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-5 (DTS)	SHOW TIME
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-6 (DOLBY)	BLOW DRY
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-7 (DOLBY)	E.T.
FARMERS PLAZA-1 (DOLBY)	HARI NG SELDA
FARMERS PLAZA-2 (DOLBY)	BLADE 2
FIESTA CARNIVAL	
NEW FRONTIER	
MANILA	
EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	HUBOG / TOO MUCH FLESH
ODEON	SHOWTIME
ODEON-2	HARI NG SELDA
ROBEN	ITLOG
TANDEM-1	SEX MEDUSA
TANDEM-2	SEX EDUCATION
TIMES	HARRY POTTER / PHOSSED
QUEZON CITY	
ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	CLOSED
ACT-4	CLOSED
CORONET-2	ORIGINAL SIN
QUEZON-1	ITLOG
REMAR	HARI NG SELDA
REMAR-2	ITLOG
NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA	
A	S2PID LUV
B	ITLOG
C	
MANDALUYONG CITY	
SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	HART'S WAR
CINEMA-2	E.T.
CAINTA RIZAL	
STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	HARI NG SELDA
CINEMA-2	IKA-7 GLORYA
CINEMA-3	ITLOG
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	BLADE 2
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	ICE AGE
CINEMA-6	GOT 2 BELIEVE
CINEMA-7	CROSS ROADS
CINEMA-8	TIME MACHINE
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	HARTS WAR
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	SHOW TIME
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO
CINEMA-12	MIMIC 2
CINEMA-14	E.T.
CINEMA-15	S2PID LUV
LORES	
CINEMA-2	CLOSED
CINEMA-3	CLOSED
POWER PLANT CINEMA	
CINEMA-1	HART'S WAR
CINEMA-2	SHOWTIME
CINEMA-3	E.T.
CINEMA-4	COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO
CINEMA-5	MIMIC 2
CINEMA-6	ICE AGE
UNIWIDE METROMALL	
(LAS PIÑAS)	
CINEMA-1	
CINEMA-2	
CINEMA-4	
UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL	
(PARAÑAQUE)	
CINEMA-1	ALIPIN NG TUKSO
CINEMA-2	THE OTHER SIDE OF LOVE
CINEMA-4	ALAMID

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DOLBY DIGITAL
NOW SHOWING
CINEMA 1 SHOWTIME
11:00, 1:10, 3:20, 5:30, 7:40, 9:50
P13
CINEMA 2 E.T.
11:30, 1:50, 4:10, 6:30, 8:50
GP
Matinee: P80.00 - Screenings before 5:00pm, Monday thru Friday (Free Seating).
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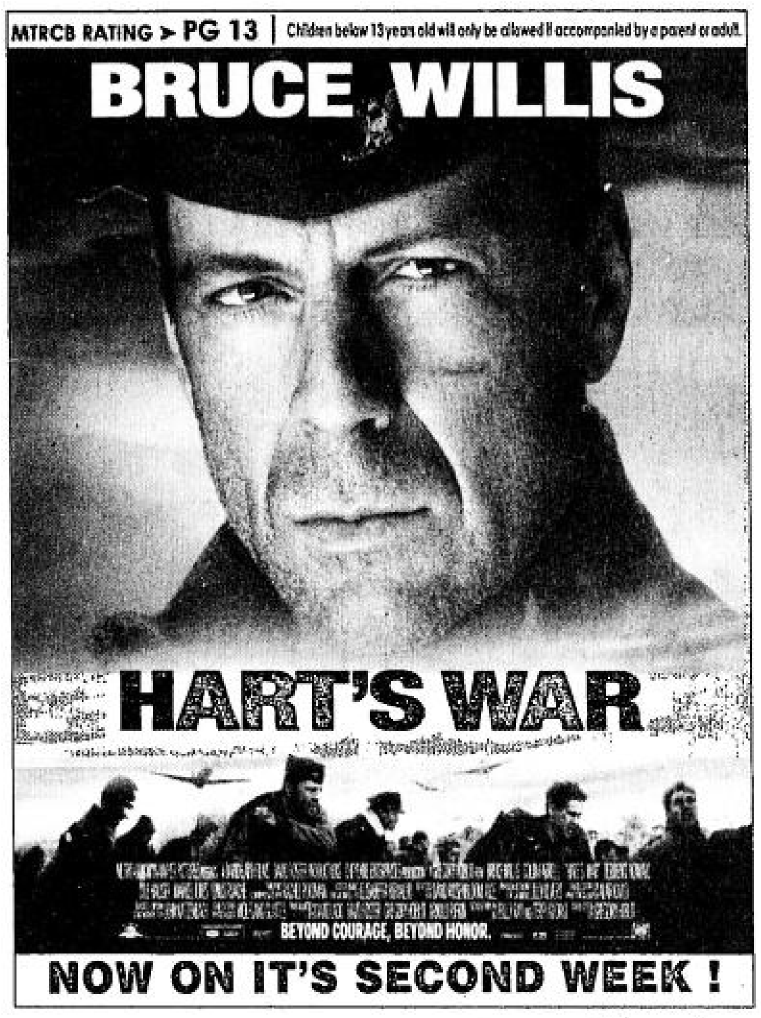
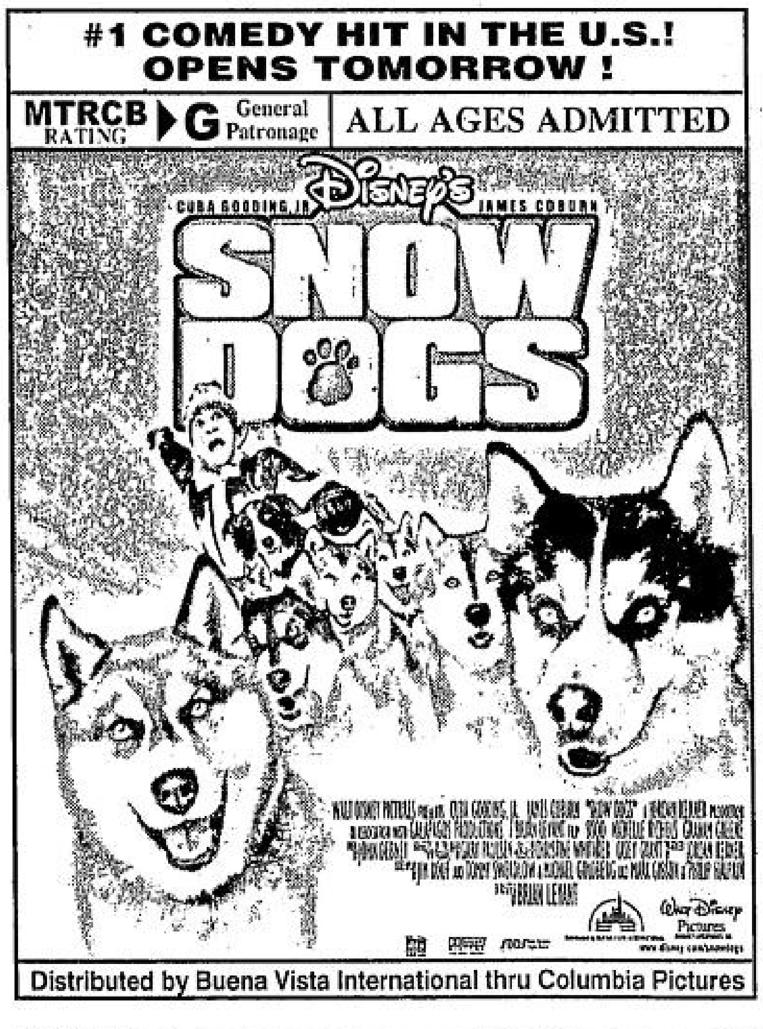
MUSIC MUSEUM
MUSIC MUSEUM APRIL 19, 2002 MS. GAY PHILIPPINES 9:00 PM
FOR INQUIRIES & RESERVATION, PLS. CALL: 721-6726 OR 721-0635


MTRCB RATING > PG 13 | Children below 13 years old will only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult.
BRUCE WILLIS
HART'S WAR
BEYOND COURAGE, BEYOND HONOR.
NOW ON IT'S SECOND WEEK !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OPENS TOMORROW !
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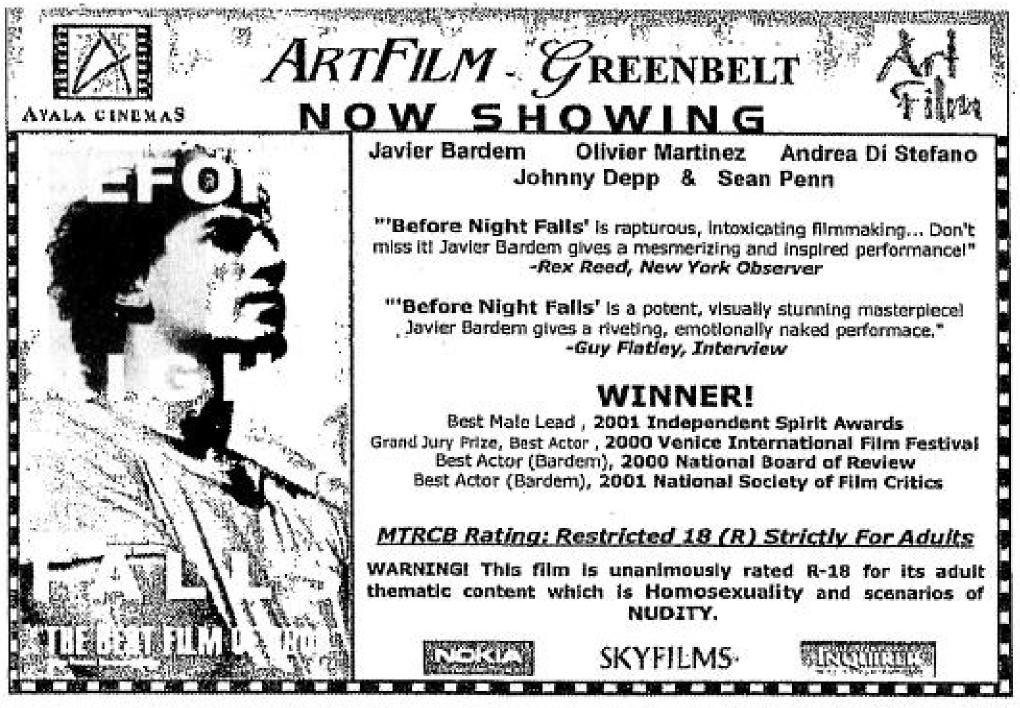
ANG PAMBANSANG THEME SONG NGAYON PELIKULA NA!
SALBAKUTA
ANDREW E.
BLAKDYAK
ANGELIKA DELA CRUZ
MAUI TAYLOR
S2PID LUV
KRISTINE JAKA MICHAEL FLORES
DIRECTED BY AL TANTAY
NOW SHOWING NATIONWIDE!

LEGEND
THE SCORPION KING 04.18.02
AYALA CINEMAS


AYALA CINEMAS
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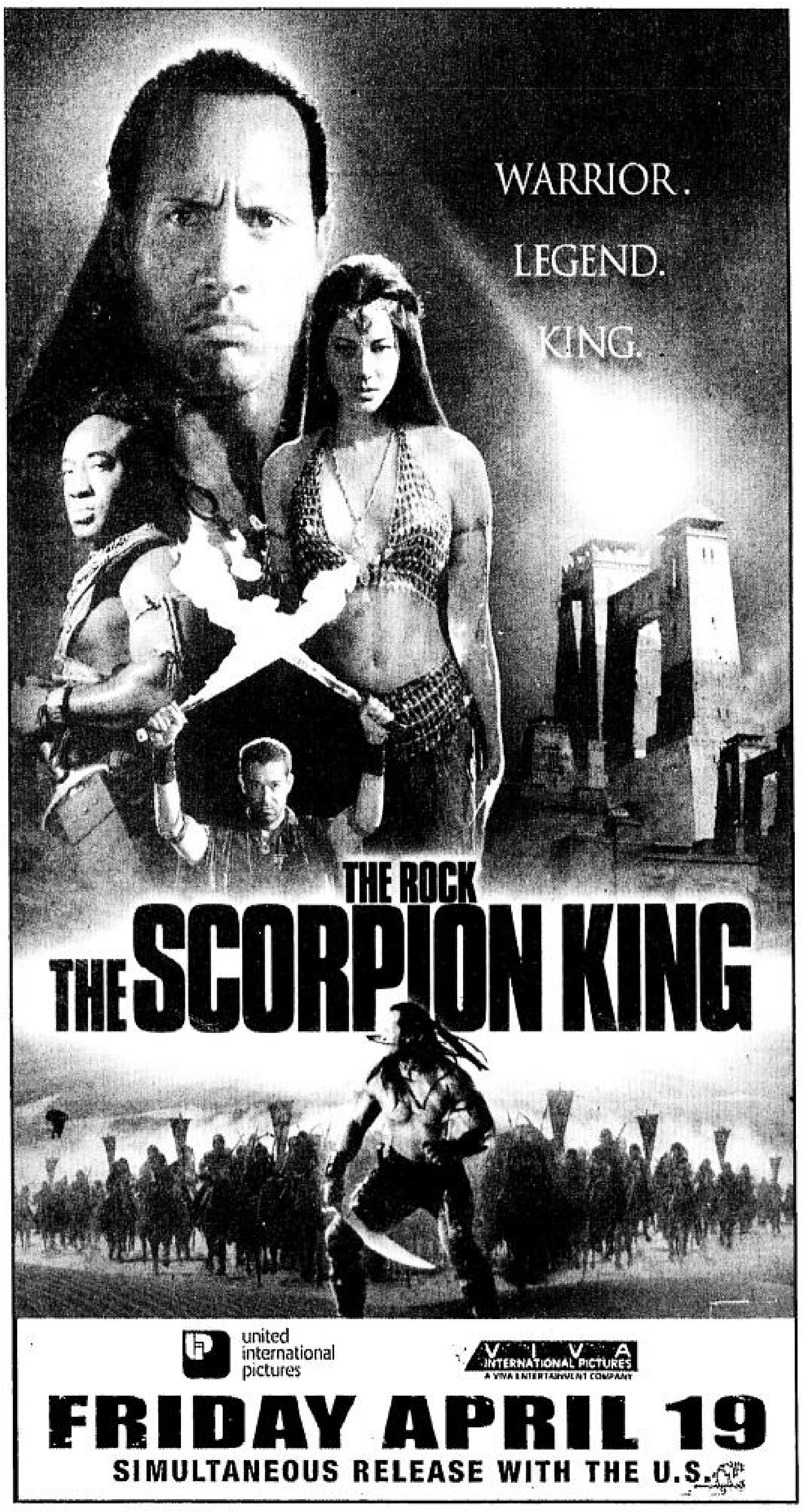
Javier Bardem Olivier Martinez Andrea Di Stefano
Johnny Depp & Sean Penn
"'Before Night Falls' is rapturous, intoxicating filmmaking... Don't miss it! Javier Bardem gives a mesmerizing and inspired performance!"
-Rex Reed, New York Observer
"'Before Night Falls' is a potent, visually stunning masterpiece! Javier Bardem gives a riveting, emotionally naked performace."
-Guy Flatley, Interview
WINNER!
Best Male Lead, 2001 Independent Spirit Awards
Grand Jury Prize, Best Actor, 2000 Venice International Film Festival
Best Actor (Bardem), 2000 National Board of Review
Best Actor (Bardem), 2001 National Society of Film Critics
MTRCB Rating: Restricted 18 (R) Strictly For Adults
WARNING! This film is unanimously rated R-18 for its adult thematic content which is Homosexuality and scenarios of NUDITY.
NOKIA SKYFILMS INQUIRER

STARCONCERTS presents
Ogie
One Night Only
with a special performance by
Ms. Regine Velasquez
APRIL 18, THURSDAY, 9 PM
Onstage
2nd level, Greenbelt Mall, Ayala Center, Makati City
Ticket Prices P600 · P900 · P1,200
Tickets are available at all TicketWorld outlets. For inquiries and reservations call 891-5610


WARRIOR.
LEGEND.
KING.
THE ROCK
THE SCORPION KING
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VIVA INTERNATIONAL PICTURES
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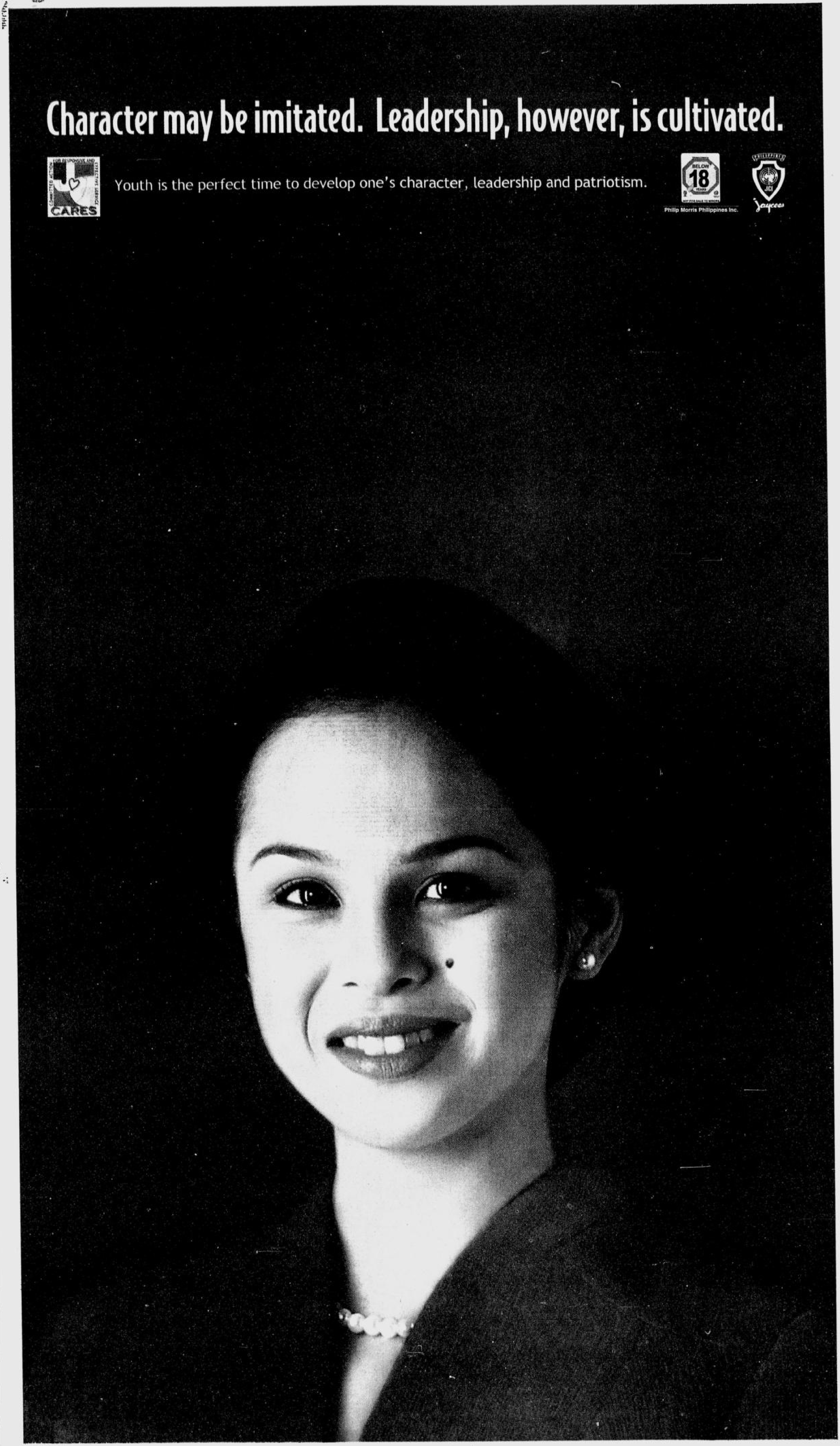
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Treasury bill yields hit record lows

By Clarissa S. Batino

TREASURY bill yields continued to fall for the 13th straight week yesterday, pushing down the benchmark 91-day rate by 82.7 basis points to a record low of 4.327 percent.

The yields in yesterday's bidding were the lowest since the Bureau of Treasury started holding weekly T-bill auctions on Oct. 24, 1986. Prior to 1986, the auction was done once a month.

"History is being made every auction. Because of this, we have been realizing huge savings that can help bring down the budget deficit for the year," said National Treasurer Sergio Edeza.

The rate of the six-month debt paper also fell by 88.1 points to 4.943 percent while the one-year T-bill rate dropped by 1.049 percentage points to 5.548 percent. The government raised P9 billion from the auction yesterday against offers that exceeded P18 billion.

Edeza said another P3 billion in funds were raised from a tap facility that the Treasury opened to banks right after the auction.

The Treasury said the government realized savings of about P9 billion in interest payments in the first quarter. He said the government could save another P9 billion in the second quarter.

Edeza noted that the prospective savings of P18 billion in debt servicing in the first half of the year could help bring down the estimated budget gap this year from P130 billion to P112 billion.

"We will likely continue realizing savings in the third and fourth quarters but perhaps, not of the same magnitude as the first two quarters' savings," said the treasurer.

Fixed income traders said the continued decline in treasury bill yields might push banks to look for other investment outlets. In the meantime, banks still opt to park their funds with the government as reflected in the huge offers received by the Treasury in its weekly auction.

"The rate is not worrisome as critics implied. Since banks could not lend efficiently in the absence of creditworthy borrowers, the government is taking advantage of the lower rates, and this condition will help companies and banks become more profitable," said the treasurer.

Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho said the yields on longer-term debt instruments should go down, otherwise, the government might be forced to cancel the issuance of long-term debt papers.

Already, the Treasury is planning to cancel the auction of government bonds maturing in five years or more in the next two months, according to Edeza.

Edeza said the government was likely to raise the volume of treasury bills being sold weekly but not necessarily through the formal auction. He said that apart from the P9 billion in debt papers being auctioned every two weeks, more funds would be raised from the tap or over-the-counter facility.

Starting this month, the Treasury is planning to limit its T-bill auction to only once every two weeks, from the present's weekly schedule.

Edeza said the over-the-counter facility would also be offered every two weeks. This will involve P1.5 billion worth of three-month notes, P1 billion worth of six-month papers and P500 million worth of one-year bills.

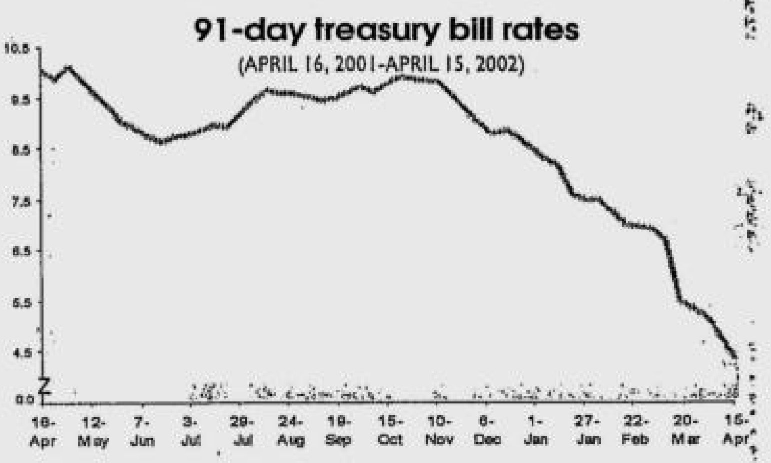
Camacho said the rates had not bottomed out yet. "The lower it gets, the more sticky it becomes," noted the finance chief.

Edeza said the inflation rate would still determine the movement of treasury bill yields although he admitted that the rates might start going up gradually by the second half of the year.

"Inflation remains the key factor but since it has been low, we expect the rates to remain low too. If treasury bill rates move up, it will not be on a wide range," said Edeza.

He believes that an increase in in the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' overnight rates would have minimal effects on the treasuries.

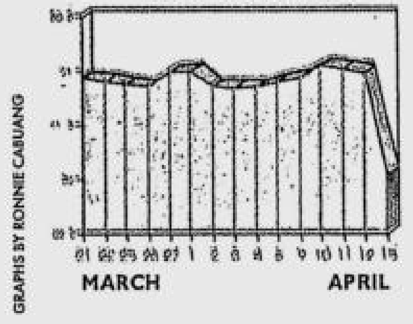
BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura said the central bank would try to delay any plan to increase overnight rates.



INDICATORS

CURRENCIES

PESO - DOLLAR



GRAPHS BY RONNIE CABUANG

PESO-DOLLAR RATE

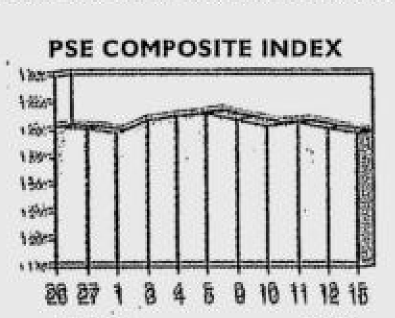
₱50.965 = $1
As of 5 p.m., April 15, 2002

¥131.62 = $1
As of 5 p.m., April 15, 2002

GOLD: $301.30/301.80
per ounce Hong Kong,
April 12, 2002

STOCK MARKET

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B2)

Stocks down 0.6%

SHARE prices yesterday fell 0.6 percent in sluggish trade amid lingering concerns over the Middle East crisis and fears of possible violence on Labor Day, brokers said.

The sell-off was led by blue chips that had their ratings in the Morgan Stanley Capital International (MSCI) index adjusted. Fund managers typically use the popular MSCI equity indices to track their share portfolios.

The Philippine Stock Exchange composite

STOCKS/ B2

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Fine in the neck

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

SOME people in the government, i.e. politicos of the highest order, are getting sick and tired of the level-headedness and the common sense of this Sen. Rodolfo Biazon.

As you already gathered by now, without a shadow of a doubt, those are the people who don't want the government to honor its debts to the Swiss company SGS.

That is the Societe Generale de Surveillance. It is a worldwide import checking firm which we hired to catch the crooks who cheated on import duties and taxes.

Under the man named Band . . . Wrist Band . . . our government unceremoniously decided it was in no mood to pay SGS. Today, we still owe the company some P6 billion.

To avoid our country's being tagged as the world's leading double-crosser, this cute administration said that, indeed, we have to honor the SGS bills.

The only problem is this Biazon. He has a sense of fairness and all that sissy stuff about principle. Thus, we cannot unilaterally cut the SGS bills even just by half.

* * *

DOING a butcher's job on the SGS bills is Customs Deputy Commissioner Emma Rosqueta. She goes around telling media about her findings of "double billings" by SGS.

No wonder, the ever inquisitive Senate just has to, er, "inquire" on her allegation. The transcript of the hearings shows that this Biazon can really be a pain in the neck.

It seems that the government has a panel of five officials reviewing the SGS bills. Being part of it, Rosqueta has no choice but to go to town with a claim of double billings.

She is the only one in the panel with such an allegation. This, apparently, makes Biazon curious. Her claims, for one, can reduce the SGS bills by one-half.

So how does she arrive at such a conclusion? It turns out Rosqueta disagrees with the way the SGS computes the total bill. So she formed her own formula.

Yet, upon Biazon's questioning, Rosqueta admits there is no universally accepted formula. So what makes hers the rule to be followed by all? *Ah, basta!*

* * *

IF that is so, to the mind of this Biazon, nobody can really determine that a particular SGS billing is either right or wrong.

In such a situation, no single person can decide what formula to use. Thus, the two parties must try to agree. That means both the government and SGS.

It does not mean that a single member of the government panel can impose her own formula on its other members, not to mention other side, which is the SGS.

You see, none of her colleagues in the panel agrees with Rosqueta's formula. In fact, because of her claim, the panel even has to check the billings one by one.

Now there are more than 2 million shipping records. It only takes the panel several months to go over all of them. Still, the others find nothing wrong with the bills.

Is it possible then that Rosqueta knows something that the others don't? Can it be that the others are colluding with the SGS to overcharge us? It's the only deduction here.

* * *

BUT under the Rosqueta formula, as I gather, any late billing by SGS is automatically deemed as double billing. If it's late, for whatever reason, it has already been billed.

The amount of the "late" and, automatically, "double" billing, at least under the Rosqueta formula, must then be deducted from the government's total obligation to SGS.

If a particular billing is delayed, for instance, because of a strong typhoon, under her formula, it is clear the billing has already been done before. Can't you see the logic?

Apparently, no one else in the government panel sees it. Neither does SGS. Thus Rosqueta must go to town (i.e media and politicos) with her formula.

Believe me, I am still trying hard to find any rhyme or reason to such a unique formula. I'm not yet sure if it's the practice in Pluto or some other known universe.

For if the real intention is to reduce the SGS bills, by hook or by crook, which can thus mean "savings" to the government, then I give up. No use cracking my brains!

* * *

MOREVER, still under the Rosqueta formula, if the SGS committed an "error" in its billings, the government must penalize SGS by at least $10,000. That's per "error."

Now, in the Senate hearings, such errors are discussed only in generalities. How much is deducted, et cetera, et cetera? You know—things like those.

The devil, as always, is in the details. I gather that, in some cases, Rosqueta simply decides, on her own, to fine SGS for the fault of the Bureau of Customs.

For instance, a portion of a shipping document requires "remarks." If the customs official does not fill it up, clearly, it's the error of SGS. It costs SGS $10,000 only.

In another case, Rosqueta cannot read the reference number. Maybe she has perfect eyesight. For such an "error," she hits SGS in the neck with a $10,000 fine.

Such a random approach must be the practice in the customs bureau. But other members of the government panel think that they should check her claims.

* * *

AND, whadayano, after the panel goes over the records one by one, it unanimously decides, out of the SGS claim of 206 million swiss francs, only 192 million was valid.

That's only 93 percent, by the way, which is a far far bigger amount than the 50 percent or so, er, "discount" which, under the Rosqueta method, the government can get.

No wonder, Rosqueta still goes around with her formula, conveniently forgetting that very same validation done by the others in her panel. Why? Who knows?

Some politicos are blocking this cute administration's decision to settle its obligation with SGS, using the same Rosqueta formula as reason.

But even under the Rosqueta formula, the SGS still clears some 104 million Swiss francs, out of its claim of 206 million in collectibles from the government.

They want to block that! Really, nobody can say what they are doing to our image as a country overseas. It's not good, I suppose.

Bankers urge PSE to invest in fixed-income exchange

By Elena R. Torrijos

THE BANKERS Association of the Philippines has invited the Philippine Stock Exchange to take up a 20-percent stake in the planned P500-million fixed-income exchange to be launched within the year.

In a briefing yesterday following the signing of a memorandum of understanding between the BAP and the US Agency for International Development, Vicente Castillo, chair of the BAP open market committee, said the BAP had yet to receive the PSE's response.

The PSE, for its part, has proposed the listing on the bourse of treasury bills bought by member-brokers through eligible dealers of government securities.

Castillo and BAP executive director Leonilo Coronel said they welcomed the move of the PSE to provide a new venue for the distribution of T-bills. They said the proposal was not expected to affect plans to put up a separate fixed-income exchange.

BAP officials said they were targeting to launch the fixed-income exchange later this year, adding that capital commitments were already being firmed up.

"We have had very fruitful discussions with some of the potential corporate issuers. In our meetings with corporate treasurers and CEOs of these companies, they have said they welcome the development of the local debt market," Castillo said.

He declined to identify these companies but other BAP officials said these included the Ayala group, San Miguel Corp. and Shell Corp.

Multilateral institutions such as the Asian Development Bank and the International Finance Corp., the investment arm of the World Bank, were also considering taking an equity stake in the planned fixed-income exchange.

The Philippine Life Insurance Association, which has affirmed its commitment to invest in the fixed-income exchange, will soon be calling on its members to cough up funds for investment in the project.

The BAP, which will hold a 20-percent stake through a P100-million investment, has already started collecting from its members.

The Investment Houses Association of the Philippines, which worked jointly with the BAP to firm up the fixed-income exchange proposal, is also expected to take a minority stake.

Under the Securities Regulation Code, no industry can own more than 20 percent of a registered exchange.

The fixed-income exchange is designed to provide a platform for the secondary trading of fixed-income securities such as government securities and commercial papers issued by companies.

Following the signing of the agreement, USAID mission director Patricia Buckles said, "USAID and the BAP believe that the establishment of an exchange, where fixed-income securities can be traded in an efficient, liquid, transparent, safe and fair market, will broaden and strengthen the Philippine financial markets and its economy as a whole."

G & W clubshares
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As of April 13, 2002

CLUB	SELLER	BUYER
Alabang Country Club "A"	1,700,000	-
Alabang Country Club "B"	1,800,000	-
Alta Vista	-	260,000
Baguio Country Club	740,000	650,000
Camp John Hay	290,000	280,000
Capitol Hills Golf & CC	140,000	115,000
Canyon Woods	200,000	190,000
Canlubang	-	-
Celebrity Sports	230,000	170,000
City Sports Club	-	Pls. Call
Eagleridge "A"	350,000	340,000
Eastridge	200,000	-
Evercrest	100,000	-
Fairways & Blue Waters	500,000	-
Fontana D/C	90,000/140,000	Pls. Call
Forest Hills "A"	230,000	210,000
Forest Hills "C"	250,000	240,000
Luisita Golf	-	320,000
Manila Polo	-	2,600,000
Makati Sports Club	300,000	250,000
Manila Southwoods "A"	650,000	620,000
Mimosa Golf Ind./C3*	100,000/300,000*	120,000/275,000*
Mt. Malarayat	350,000	-
Orchard	230,000	210,000
Phil. Columbian	80,000	60,000
Punta Fuego	600,000	550,000
Puerto Azul	170,000	-
Quezon City Sports Club	240,000	200,000
Riviera Golf "A"/"C"*	200,000/450,000*	-
Riviera Golf "B"	250,000	-
Rockwell	-	390,000
Royale Tagaytay A/C	90,000/140,000	Pls. Call
Sherwoods	110,000	-
Subic Bay Yacht Club "Corp"	400,000	330,000
Subic Golf	180,000	-
Tagaytay Country Club	-	380,000
Tagaytay Highlands Golf & CC	-	850,000
Tagaytay Midlands	-	750,000
Valley Golf & CC	-	230,000
Valle Verde (Indv.)	175,000	160,000
Wack Wack Golf	7,300,000	6,800,000

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AS OF APRIL 15, 2002

	SELLING	BUYING
1. ALABANG COUNTRY CLUB "A"	1,750,000	
2. ALABANG COUNTRY CLUB "B"	1,850,000	1,700,000
3. BAGUIO COUNTRY CLUB	750,000	680,000
4. CALATAGAN GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB "A"	100,000	80,000
5. CAMP JOHN HAY	300,000	250,000
6. CANLUBANG GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB	600,000	
7. CAPITOL HILLS GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB	130,000	120,000
8. CELEBRITY CLUB	180,000	
9. COUNTRY CLUB AT TAGAYTAY HIGHLANDS		370,000
10. CLUB FILIPINO	210,000	200,000
11. EASTRIDGE GOLF CLUB "A"	200,000	
12. EAGLERIDGE GOLF CLUB "A"	340,000	
13. EVERCREST GOLF CLUB "A"	100,000	
14. FOREST HILLS GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB "A"	220,000	
15. FOREST HILLS GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB "B"	280,000	
16. FOREST HILLS GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB "C"	500,000	
17. MAKATI SPORTS CLUB "A"	280,000	250,000
18. MAKATI SPORTS CLUB "B"	300,000	
19. MANILA GOLF CLUB (IND.)	11,000,000	
20. MANILA POLO CLUB	2,600,000	2,650,000
21. MANILA SOUTHWOODS GOLF CLUB "A"	650,000	620,000
22. MANILA SOUTHWOODS GOLF CLUB "B"	750,000	700,000
23. METROPOLITAN CLUB "A"	140,000	100,000
24. METROPOLITAN CLUB "B"	150,000	
25. MT. MALARAYAT GOLF CLUB (IND.)	350,000	330,000
26. ORCHARD GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB "A"	230,000	200,000
27. ORCHARD GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB "B"	250,000	
28. ORCHARD GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB "C"	370,000	
29. QUEZON CITY SPORTS CLUB	220,000	200,000
30. RIVIERA GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB "A"	200,000	
31. RIVIERA GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB "B"	250,000	230,000
32. STA. ELENA GOLF CLUB "A"		1,700,000
33. SUBIC BAY YACHT CLUB (IND)	250,000	
34. TAGAYTAY HIGHLANDS INT'L. GOLF CLUB		850,000
35. TAGAYTAY MIDLAND		750,000
36. VALLE VERDE COUNTRY CLUB	170,000	150,000
37. VALLEY GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB	240,000	200,000
38. WACK WACK GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB		6,500,000

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PSE suspends Fil-Estate trading

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PHILIPPINE Stock Exchange yesterday suspended the trading of Fil-Estate Land Inc.'s shares for its failure to comply with the bourse's financial reportorial requirements.

In a memorandum to brokers, the PSE said the trading of Fil-Estate shares would remain suspended until the requirements were fulfilled.

It said Fil-Estate had failed to submit the required 200 copies of its annual report for the fiscal year ending Sept. 30, 2001 and to pay the basic and daily fines.

The PSE charges a basic fine of P50,000 and another P5,000 per day for the delay in the submission of these requirements.

Fil-Estate officials were not available for comment yesterday. PSE sources said the company, like in previous years, cited delays in the auditing of its balance sheets for its failure to submit the requirements.

However, the company yesterday issued a press statement indicating that it had submitted its financial statements to the PSE.

In the statement, the company reported a 45-percent increase in its revenues for fiscal year 2001 ending Sept. 20, 2001.

Company chief financial officer Roberto Roco said consolidated revenues increased to P1.8 billion in 2001 from P1.2 billion in 2000. The increase, Roco said, was attributed to improved social and political conditions that brought about a 90-percent increase in sales of real estate, and golf club and resort sales.

He said the company's efforts to enhance efficiency and cut down costs contributed to the improvement in the company's financial standing.

Fil-Estate shares were last traded on Friday at P0.34, up from P0.26 at the start of the year.

A property development company owned by businessman Robert Sobrepeña, Fil-Estate pursues horizontal and high-rise residential and commercial properties as well as golf courses and resorts through subsidiaries Fil-Estate Properties Inc. and Fil-Estate Golf and Development Inc.

The company's main revenue sources are residential lots and condominium projects, particularly lots in Forest Hills Residential Estates, Golf and Country Club in Antipolo, Plaridel Heights, Renaissance Center and Paragon Plaza.

COUNTRY SHARES
As of April 16, 2002

	BUYING	SELLING
ALABANG COUNTRY CLUB A/B*	1,650,000/1,700,000*	-
ALTA VISTA A	300,000	-
BAGUIO COUNTRY CLUB	725,000	-
CALATAGAN GOLF CLUB A/B*	75,000	95,000/105,000*
CAMP JOHN HAY	265,000	-
CANLUBANG	500,000	-
CAPITOL HILLS	-	125,000
CELEBRITY SPORTS CLUB	180,000	190,000
EAGLE RIDGE A/B*/C**	620,000**	350,000/450,000*/700,000**
EVERCREST A/B*	135,000*	100,000
FONTANA D/C*/B**	-	90,000/150,000*/280,000**
FOREST HILLS A/B*/C**	200,000	230,000/300,000*/325,000**
MAKATI SPORTS A/B*	250,000	270,000/300,000*
MANILA POLO CLUB	2,550,000	2,750,000
MANILA SOUTHWOODS A/B*	650,000/730,000*	700,000/750,000*
METROPOLITAN A/B*	-	120,000/125,000*
MIMOSA IND./C2*	120,000/200,000*	155,000/255,000*
MT. MALARAYAT A/C*	-	350,000/625,000*
ORCHARD A/B*/C**	200,000	230,000/350,000*/425,000**
PUERTO AZUL	-	125,000
QUEZON CITY SPORTS CLUB	205,000	225,000
RIVIERA A/B*	-	185,000/400,000*
ROCKWELL CLUB	-	500,000
ROYALE TAGAYTAY A/B*/C**	-	90,000/150,000*/180,000**
SHERWOOD HILLS A/B*/C**	-	150,000/250,000*/350,000**
STA. ELENA GOLF CLUB A/B*	2,100,000*	1,750,000
SUBIC BAY IND./CORP.*	290,000*	200,000/350,000*
TAT FILIPINAS GOLF A/B*	-	350,000/550,000*
TAGAYTAY HIGHLANDS CC/GOLF*	400,000/900,000*	425,000/950,000*
TAGAYTAY MIDLANDS	750,000	830,000
VALLEY VERDE IND.	150,000	170,000
VALLEY GOLF	230,000	-

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PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of Monday, April 15, 2002)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Bank of the Phil. Islands	66.5	67.5	66	67.5	1,171,700
China Banking Corp.	625	625	625	625	2,220
Citystate Savings Bank	14.25	14.25	14.25	14.25	2,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	41.5	41.5	41.5	41.5	43,300
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	41.5	42	41.5	41.5	177,200
Philippine National Bank	58	58	56	56	9,200
Phil. Savings Bank	27.5	28	27.5	28	9,900
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	12.75	12.75	12.25	12.25	15,000
Union Bank of the Phil.	23.5	23.5	23	23	5,400
FINANCIAL SERVICE					
Bankard Inc.	1.46	1.46	1.46	1.46	90,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1400	1405	1400	1400	5,940
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	0.96	0.96	0.96	0.96	50,000
Sun Life Financial Serv.	1110	1115	1105	1115	21,520
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	34.5	34.5	34.5	34.5	400
Digital Telecom Phils. Inc.	0.66	0.66	0.65	0.66	2,600,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	805	805	805	805	320
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.055	0.055	0.0525	0.0525	2,600,000
Liberty Telecoms Holdings	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	100,000
Piltel	0.5	0.51	0.49	0.49	5,080,000
Phil. Telegraph & Tel. Co.	0.22	0.22	0.21	0.21	190,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	545	545	530	540	63,130
Ivantage Corp.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	420,000
Philweb.Com Inc.	0.02	0.02	0.018	0.018	25,200,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	30	30	29.5	29.5	38,800
Manila Electric Co. B	47	47.5	47	47.5	517,400
Petron Corp.	1.74	1.76	1.72	1.72	4,111,000
Salcon Power Corp.	1.82	1.84	1.82	1.84	1,868,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	530,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	2.9	2.95	2.85	2.95	1,004,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	440,000
Phil Nat'l Const. Corp.	5	5	5	5	4,000
Union Cement Corp.	0.62	0.65	0.62	0.62	400,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.1	587,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	13	13.25	13	13.25	54,800
La Tondeña Distillers Inc.	21.5	21.75	21.5	21.75	15,600
RFM Corp.	1.46	1.46	1.46	1.46	452,000
Swift Food Inc.	1.8	1.8	1.7	1.7	60,000
San Miguel Corp. A	47.5	48	47.5	47.5	234,800
San Miguel Corp. B	62	62	61.5	61.5	76,600
HOLDING FIRMS					
Ayala Corp.	6.4	6.4	6.2	6.3	2,794,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	2.08	2.08	2.04	2.04	386,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.58	0.58	0.58	0.58	60,000
A. Soriano Corp.	0.57	0.57	0.57	0.57	90,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.008	0.008	0.008	0.008	3,000,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.33	100,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	2.8	2.85	2.7	2.85	100,000
ATN Holdings Inc. B	2	2.95	2	2.95	2,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs.	0.13	0.13	0.13	0.13	30,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	9.8	9.8	9.8	9.8	12,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.72	0.72	0.71	0.71	3,780,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	100,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	200,000
Ebecom Holdings Inc.	0.0825	0.0875	0.0825	0.0875	5,300,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1.38	1.38	1.36	1.36	400,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	30.5	30.5	30	30	120,500
Forum Pacific Inc.	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	150,000
Global Equities Inc.	0.145	0.145	0.145	0.145	20,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	1.78	1.78	1.76	1.76	94,000
Megaworld Corp.	0.85	0.86	0.84	0.86	100,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	0.64	0.64	0.6	0.6	1,560,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	3,500,000
Music Corp.	0.31	0.32	0.3	0.32	110,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16	300,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	0.89	0.9	0.89	0.89	70,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Cerro-Coat Inc.	1.44	1.44	1.44	1.44	10,000
Metro Alliance Holdings	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	90,000
SPI Technologies Inc.	13	13	13	13	1,000
Steniel Manufacturing	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	30,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICE					
Bello Corp.	0.61	0.61	0.6	0.6	550,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.58	0.58	0.58	0.58	40,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp.(Pdr)	34.5	34.5	34	34	221,700
DMCI Holdings Inc.-Pref.	765	765	765	765	100
Globe Telecom Hldg. (Pdr)	785	785	785	785	300
Jollibee Warrants	12.75	12.75	12.75	12.75	22,800
Omico Corp. Warrant	0.0002	0.0002	0.0002	0.0002	2,000,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series T	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	500
PLDT (10% Pref) Series U	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	1,700
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	1,100
PLDT (10% Pref) Series X	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	1,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Z	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	1,200
PLDT 10% Pref Series Bb	10	10	10	10	1,000
Philweb.Com Inc.-Warrants	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	176,000,000
OTHERS					
Far Eastern University	450	450	450	450	740
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	7.2	7.2	7	7	2,354,000
Araneta Properties Inc.	0.21	0.21	0.21	0.21	50,000
C & P Homes Inc.	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	3,420,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.46	0.46	0.45	0.45	6,050,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	650,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	2.55	2.55	2.48	2.5	2,829,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.07	400,000
SM Development Corp.	0.98	0.98	0.98	0.98	130,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	6.4	6.4	6.2	6.2	9,631,000
MINING					
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't.	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	13,000
Itogon-Suyoc Mines A	0.049	0.049	0.047	0.047	28,800,000
Omico Corp.	0.0042	0.0042	0.0042	0.0042	9,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	0.27	0.27	0.26	0.26	800,000
OIL					
Imperial Res.	0.018	0.018	0.018	0.018	500,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.0046	0.0046	0.0046	0.0046	25,000,000
Pacifica	0.014	0.014	0.014	0.014	20,000,000
South China Resources Inc.	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	40,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.18	0.18	0.16	0.16	1,300,000

CURRENCIES

April 15, 2002

Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Foreign currency in US$	Foreign currency in Peso
United States	Dollar	1.136493	1.000000	51.0320
Japan	Yen	0.008612	0.007578	0.3867
United Kingdom	Pound	1.633026	1.436900	73.3279
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.145713	0.128213	6.5430
Switzerland	Franc	0.682087	0.600168	30.6278
Canada	Dollar	0.716804	0.630716	32.1867
Singapore	Dollar	0.618937	0.544603	27.7922
Australia	Dollar	0.607750	0.534759	27.2898
Bahrain	Dinar	3.014730	2.652661	135.3706
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.303057	0.266660	13.6082
Brunei	Dollar	0.617224	0.543095	27.7152
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000119	0.000105	0.0054
Thailand	Baht	0.026109	0.022973	1.1724
UAE	Dirham	0.309435	0.272272	13.8946
Korea	Won	0.000859	0.000756	0.0386
Euro	Euro	1.000000	0.879900	44.9031
Brazil	Real	0.494557	0.435161	22.2071
Denmark	Kroner	0.134440	0.118294	6.0368
India	Rupee	0.023270	0.020475	1.0449
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.299077	0.263158	13.4295
Mexico	New Peso	0.124247	0.109325	5.5791
New Zealand	Dollar	0.503363	0.442909	22.6025
Norway	Kroner	0.131374	0.115596	5.8991
Pakistan	Rupee	0.018973	0.016694	0.8519
South Africa	Rand	0.101689	0.089476	4.5661
Sweden	Kroner	0.110232	0.096993	4.9497
Syria	Pound	0.025829	0.022727	1.1598
Taiwan	NT Dollar	0.032564	0.028653	1.4622
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.001369	0.001205	0.0615

Treasury bill . . .

From page B1

index shed 8.96 points to close at 1,396.38.

Turnover fell to 361.07 million shares worth P350.54 million from Friday's 369 million shares worth P530.7 million.

"I think nothing much will happen to the market in the short-term," said Teresa Lee-Jahrling of Tower Securities.

SM Prime Holdings Corp. was among the losers, after foreign funds sold off the stock following a cut in its MSCI weighting to 9.37 percent from 14.18 percent from May 31. SM Prime fell 20 centavos to P6.20.

"This weakness is an opportunity to accumulate the stock since it remains fundamentally sound," said Astro del Castillo of A and A Securities. He said immediate support for SM Prime could be seen at P6.20.

Bank of the Philippine Islands, which was added in the MSCI index, was the most actively traded stock, closing P1.50 up at P67.50.

B shares of Manila Electric Co. inched up 50 centavos to P47.50, while Ayala Land Inc. fell 20 centavos to P7.

Brokers said they were expecting the market to remain listless amid threats from militant labor organizations and supporters of ousted President Joseph Estrada they would carry out mass protests on May 1.

Last year, four people were killed and more than 100 were injured and arrested when a march by Estrada supporters on presidential palace degenerated into rioting. *AFP*

PAL derails Philippine-UAE air service talks

By Abigail L. Ho

PHILIPPINE Airlines Inc. has derailed talks that would have placed more flights along the Philippine-United Arab Emirates route.

In a memorandum dated April 3 issued to the Philippine air panel, Civil Aeronautics Board executive director Manuel San Jose said the talks would be scheduled "at a later date," but no particular date was set.

"Considering the latest comments by some members of the panel and PAL on the preparations and timeliness of the subject air talks scheduled on April 28 to 29, 2002, our suggestion to postpone and move it at a later date was given approval by the (Department of Transportation and Communications) secretary (as chair of the air panel)," San Jose said in her memorandum.

An industry source revealed that PAL early this month filed an opposition with the CAB regarding the holding of air talks with the UAE.

Another source disclosed that PAL had a good reason to derail the air talks, as it stood to lose some revenues should the Philippines and the UAE reach a deal.

PAL flies three times a week to UAE member state Dubai through a code-sharing agreement with its local carrier, Emirates Airlines.

In a code-sharing agreement, an airline could sell tickets bearing its name even without actually flying to a certain country. Involved carriers work out a revenue-sharing scheme for passengers' fares.

Emirates currently pays "rent" to PAL for three weekly flights.

"If the Philippine air panel grants Emirates additional frequencies, it won't need to codeshare with PAL. PAL will then lose revenues," the source said.

3 foreign firms set to explore for oil, gas in RP

THREE companies abroad are set to explore for oil and gas in the Philippines, as an updated map of the country's petroleum reserves shows that about 8 trillion barrels of fuel have yet to be tapped.

In a news briefing yesterday, Energy Secretary Vincent Perez Jr. said each of the three firms was expected to drill at least one well representing a total of $23 million in investments.

Perez said the three companies were from the United Kingdom, Canada and Japan.

"We are in the thick of discussions, and we expect to award three geophysical survey and exploration contracts in two weeks," he said.

Perez said these contracts would cover two offshore prospects in northwest Palawan and Cebu.

A recently completed resource assessment showed that 16 sedimentary basins may be holding about 8 trillion barrels of oil. Of this, 3.5 billion barrels are believed to be oil reserves, while 4.4 billion barrels may be natural gas.

Perez also said the Department of Energy would launch an aggressive campaign to promote these untapped resources among possible investors in Europe.

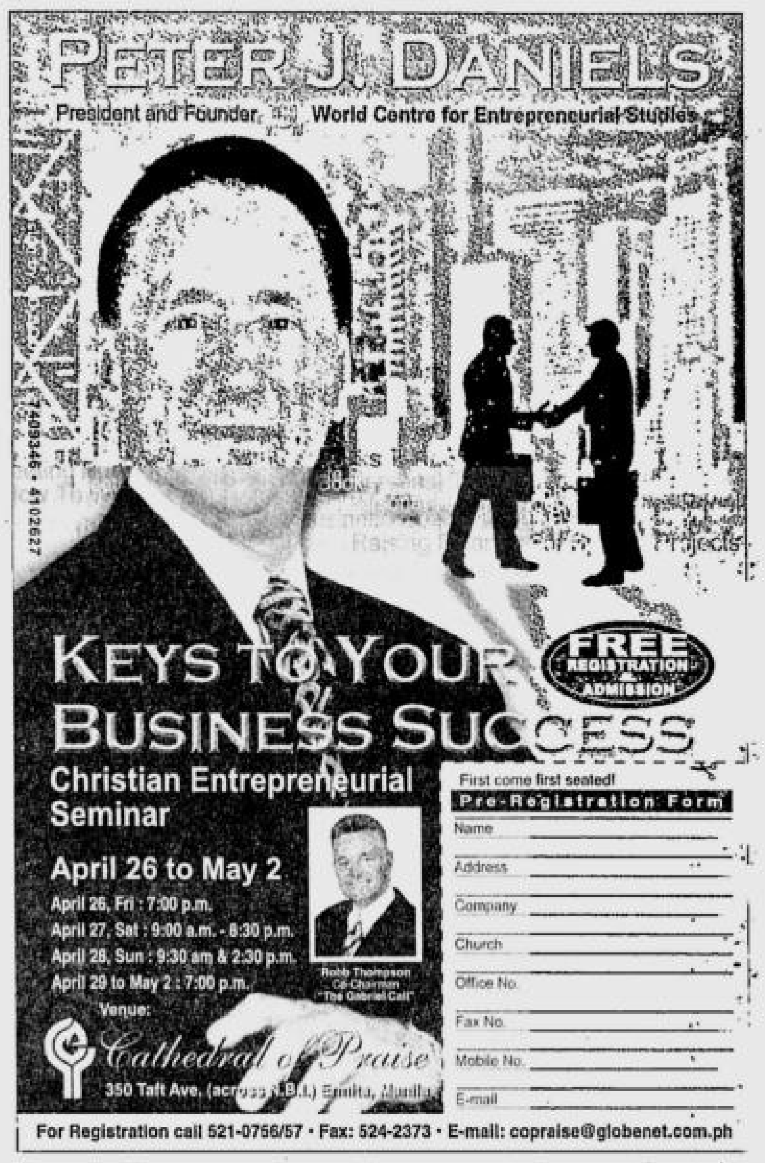
"We might start with a conference of petroleum firms in Norway in August," he said.

Perez added that the energy department would lobby for changes in the law to allow better incentives for investors.

He said one such change might be for the enhancement of cost recovery and the possible reduction of government shares in projects that would tackle marginal prospects.

According to government data, the basins cover an area of 700,000 square kilometers, or seven times the country's land area.

The resource assessment project was led by The Bridge Group of Norway AS and was funded through the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation.



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PSE prexy seen junking stocks rights offering rule

PHILIPPINE Stock Exchange president Ernest Leung is keen on repealing the stock rights offering that dormant companies are required to undertake before they can take in new investors.

Leung, however, is insisting on a condition that at least two-thirds of the company's voting stock will agree to waive such a requirement that, in turn, is aimed at protecting minority shareholders from unfair dilution.

Leung told reporters that the controversy over the listing of new shares equivalent to 40 percent of Itogon-Suyoc Mines Inc. sold to Philweb.Com Inc. uncovered some flaws in the PSE's rules that should be corrected.

The PSE's general rule is that the issuer must undertake a stock rights offering as a prerequisite before it can list new shares to ensure that the rights of the minority are protected.

Itogon Suyoc appealed for exemption, citing its situation as a moribund company and arguing that a rights offering was not possible since no underwriter would be willing to assume the risks.

"There's always a qualified majority, and the others have to live with it," Leung said.

The PSE president also explained that should a dormant company get a white knight to improve its operations, the rest of the minority shareholders would likewise gain from it. *Doris C. Dumlao*

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Oil firms say Malampaya oil to entail additional costs

THE COUNTRY'S oil refiners said yesterday that they would incur huge expenses should they reconfigure their facilities to accommodate crude from the Camago-Malampaya natural gas find.

These firms were reacting to a proposal for them to use the local resource in case of a global oil crisis.

Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp. external affairs manager Roberto Kanapi told the INQUIRER that Pilipinas Shell would need to retool its refinery to make it accept Camago-Malampaya oil.

"Our refinery is set to take in crude from the Middle East," Kanapi said. "(Changing the settings) poses a major cost in time and money."

Kanapi noted, however, that the government owned Malampaya oil, and that it held the decision on what to do with it.

"Certainly, we will have to use Malampaya oil if the government orders us to do so," Kanapi said.

Caltex Philippines Inc. corporate affairs manager Marian Catedral said Caltex Philippines was reviewing its systems to prepare in case of a need to use Malampaya oil.

"(Supply from a local source) would certainly be a big help in case of a crisis," Catedral said in an interview. *Ronnel W. Domingo*

LGU Guaranty says ₱1.5B worth of projects in pipeline

LGU Guaranty Corp., a joint venture between the Development Bank of the Philippines and some members of the Bankers Association of the Philippines, has some P1.2 billion to P1.5 billion worth of projects in the pipeline, and two are expected to get guaranty go-aheads next week.

In an interview yesterday, LGUGC president Jesus Tirona said the LGUGC board would likely approve next week guaranty for the establishment of public markets in Daragay, Albay, and in Bayambang, Pangasinan, worth P75 million and P42 million, respectively.

Other projects still undergoing study by LGUGC include Masbate City's planned P150-million integrated fish port, Taytay province's town center worth about P120 million and a P50-million water supply project for San Vicente town in Palawan.

More projects are pending but these have yet to reach advanced stages, Tirona said.

All projects, however, already carry appropriate board resolutions from their respective councils. *Elena R. Torrijos*

Quedancor reports 102% net income hike to ₱18.5M

QUEDAN Rural Credit and Guarantee Corp. said yesterday that it chalked up a net income of P18.5 million last year, up 102 percent from the previous year's P9.15 million.

In a news conference, Quedancor president and chief executive Nelson Buenaflor said the state-run agency's earnings grew as it allocated more resources for re-lending and got paid 100 percent of the time.

Buenaflor reported that as of Dec. 31, 2001, Quedancor's total resources stood at P3.89 billion, 58 percent higher than in December 2000, when it had about P2.46 billion in resources.

Quedancor covered for the continuous slump in loans extended by banks to the agricultural sector last year, he said.

"There was a sudden shift in the composition of our portfolio. Because private banks have reduced their exposure to agricultural projects, our guarantee operations have gone down, and 70 percent of our clients have availed of our direct lending facilities," Buenaflor said.

He said this was also an indication that participation of private financial institutions in the guarantee programs was declining since the 1997-1998 Asian financial crisis. *Christine A. Gaylican*

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US LEADING THE WAY TO RECOVERY

World economy brightens post Sept. 11 attack

WASHINGTON—Prospects for the world economy appeared bleak after Sept. 11. The situation has brightened of late, given a surprisingly strong US rebound.

The International Monetary Fund will release an updated "World Economic Outlook" on Thursday that will serve as the basis for the discussions among finance officials at their weekend meetings.

Michael Mussa, who for a decade was the IMF's chief economist, agrees that prospects have improved after last year's global slowdown, the most severe in a decade.

"The world economy will see a significant recovery of growth in 2002 and 2003," he forecasts. But he warns this outlook could be derailed by "a major terrorist outrage on the scale of Sept. 11" or a sustained jump in oil prices caused by Mideast tensions.

Meanwhile, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank are enduring name-calling and finger pointing—even from the finance ministers who set the institutions' policy.

It's not always the case that the toughest language comes from anti-globalization protesters, who are expected to turn out in the thousands for this weekend's spring meetings.

For example, Clare Short, Britain's outspoken international development secretary, termed a US proposal to shift World Bank loans to grants "crazy." Not to be outdone, the equally blunt Paul O'Neill, President Bush's Treasury secretary, labeled Short's counterproposal "just stupid."

Such tough talk in public is not the norm for finance ministers and central bank presidents who meet twice a year to set policy for the 183-nation IMF and its sister lending organization, the World Bank.

But in the wake of Sept. 11, the rich countries are feeling pressured as never before to do a better job of dealing with the 1 billion people in the world—one in six—who live in abject poverty, getting by on less than $1 per day.

President Bush and world leaders were in Monterrey, Mexico, last month to endorse development goals to deal with the economic despair that has proved a fertile breeding ground for terrorist groups.

Under the consensus reached in Monterrey, the wealthy countries will increase their foreign aid spending and be more selective about which countries get the assistance.

Favored will be countries that adopt sound economic reforms and control corruption.

Much disagreement remain over just how these goals will be put into practice by organizations such as the World Bank, the world's biggest source of development assistance, and the IMF, which specializes in helping countries deal with financial crises.

At the meetings in Washington, anti-globalization protesters will be joined by anti-war demonstrators who plan to press their opposition to an expanded US war on terrorism and the violence in the Middle East.

From within, the lending institutions are facing unaccustomed criticism.

William Easterly, an economist on leave from the World Bank, has written a searing indictment that the bank over its 57-year history has wasted billions in failed efforts to boost economic growth in many parts of the world.

A former chief economist at the IMF said this month in a study that the IMF had botched its handling of the economic crisis in Argentina. Michael Mussa, who left his IMF post last year, said the IMF did little to avert what became a disastrous default. ***AP/AFP***

Federal Reserve chief may not answer questions on possible interest rate hike

WASHINGTON—Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan and his colleagues have already dealt with the delicate task of preparing financial markets for a possible rise in interest rates.

Now, the big question is, when will that increase occur? For clues to the all-important timing of a borrowing cost increase, investors will scour Greenspan's Capitol Hill testimony on Wednesday.

But analysts believe the Fed chief will offer little in the way of an answer.

Economists predicted they may at least have cause for relief at the end of the day, since the tenor of current economic data and the ongoing turmoil in the Middle East are likely to keep Greenspan from signaling that a rate increase is imminent. However, beyond that, the ever-elusive Fed chief may do little to lend clarity to the timing debate.

"It probably will be an 'on the one hand, on the other hand' testimony," said former Fed vice chairman Alan Blinder, who is a Princeton University economist.

Greenspan is scheduled to appear before Congress' Joint Economic Committee on Wednesday to discuss "Monetary Policy and the Economic Outlook."

His testimony comes less than three weeks before the May 7 meeting of the Fed's policy arm, the Federal Open Market Committee.

The last time Greenspan gave a major economic address was on March 7, when he declared that the recession that began the previous March was over and that an expansion was "well under way."

Shortly after that, on March 19, the FOMC dropped its long-held warning about a recession and declared that the economy was growing at a "significant pace."

Economists saw the FOMC statement and Greenspan's March 7 testimony as laying the groundwork for an eventual increase in the federal funds rate.

When the Fed was in an aggressive recession-fighting mode last year, the funds rate, which governs overnight loans between banks, was slashed to a 40-year low of 1.75 percent.

Economists say there is a need to "normalize" the funds rate, which would involve bringing it higher to avoid a situation where bargain borrowing costs begin to act like grease on a fire, prompting the economy to overheat.

While some in financial markets had been zeroing in on May 7 as a possible time for the Fed to begin boosting interest rates for the first time in two years, that talk fell silent as a run of robust data gave way to softer reports, leading to a murkier outlook for the economy.

"The second quarter is starting on a weakish note," said Roger Kubarych, a New York-based economic adviser to Germany's Hypo-Vereins Bank.

If the Fed stands pat on May 7, the FOMC meetings on June 25-26 or Aug. 13 are other possible dates when the Fed might start increasing rates.

Several analysts said tame inflation gives the Fed some leeway to put off rate rises until at least June, or even later. In the year ended in February, the Consumer Price Index rose a slight 1.1 percent. It was up a moderate 2.6 percent in the core index, which strips out volatile food and energy costs.

Princeton's Blinder said that at a time when growing Middle East turmoil adds a new element of uncertainty to the economic picture, Greenspan will want to avoid getting pinned down on the economic and rate outlook and won't want to throw any curve balls to financial markets.

"Greenspan has not the slightest reason to try to shake the markets," said Blinder, who predicted the tone of the Fed chairman's remarks would be "mellow."

The Mideast conflict—which worsened with Friday's suicide bombing in a crowded Jerusalem market—have so far not dealt a big blow to the US stock market but if oil prices see a large and sustained spike, both the market and the nascent US economic recovery could face risks. ***Reuters***

Business trust lacking in China, top managers say

BEIJING—A lack of trust in doing business is one of the biggest headaches for Chinese managers, with over 90 percent saying they have been engaged in at least one contract dispute in the last year, according to survey findings published Monday.

In the nationwide survey of 4,695 managers, a little over 7 percent said they had been engaged in 10 or more contract disputes in the last year, while only 8.6 percent said they had not had a contract dispute during the period, the Beijing Youth Daily said.

The lack of trust in Chinese business was mainly due to indebted companies, firms that did not live up to their commitments and those that engaged in producing fake or shoddy products, it said.

The survey was conducted by the China Entrepreneur Survey System, which polled board directors, company managers, chief executives and factory managers, the paper said.

Other areas of concern included false information, poor quality or falsely advertised quality and trademark or patent infringements.

The managers felt the worst business behavior was found in the construction and real estate industries, while the industries most likely to have indebted enterprises included mining, garment manufacturing and construction, it said.

Lack of business morals stemmed from poor implementation of laws by government departments, low level of business ethics among enterprise managers and the quest for short-term profits, it said.

According to the China Daily, 76 percent of those polled said defaults on loan payments was their top concern, while most said establishing a good credit rating was crucial to enterprise development.

The respondents called on the government to tighten its grip on bad credit, introduce more legislation on credit and restructure the credit system. ***AFP***

Australia's Virgin Blue set to spread wings to Asia

SYDNEY—Australia's cut price domestic airline Virgin Blue is set to expand into international skies with flights to Asia within a year, its owner, British tycoon Richard Branson, said Monday.

Virgin, launched less than two years ago, will compete on Asian routes with Australian Airlines, Qantas Airways Ltd.'s newly established low-cost airline due to begin operations in October.

But Branson said while Asia would be the target market and New Zealand would "definitely" be one of Virgin Blue's first international destinations, it was yet to be decided where Virgin Blue would link up with Virgin Atlantic.

"We have to decide whether it's Virgin Atlantic that flies the whole way here or maybe Virgin Blue flies to meet Virgin Atlantic in Hong Kong or Shanghai or Tokyo," Branson told reporters in Brisbane.

"We'll actually be having those talks or discussions over the next three or four days."

Branson also revealed plans to list Virgin Blue on the Australian Stock Exchange within the next year or two.

His company's new partnership with transport and logistics company Patrick Corp. would assist with funding operations up to a float, he added.

Patrick's managing director, Chris Corrigan, will formally sign an agreement to take a 50-percent stake in Virgin Blue for $260 million this week.

He said Virgin Blue would be happy to compete head on with Australian Airlines, which will initially fly between Cairns and six Asian ports. Branson also said he also looked forward to flying to Bali one day.

"Competition is good for the consumer, as long as it is fair competition," he said. "There is certainly room for two really good airlines in Australia.

"I think it is going to be easier for us to keep our costs at a reasonable level than Qantas. We feel confident that we can survive and thrive."

He promised Virgin Blue would keep air fares consistently low, even running $1 air fare sales occasionally.

"It is something we can do if we can get the load factors high and keep our costs down and we are exceeding at that," he said

Branson boasted Virgin Blue's growth had been "incredible"—racing from nowhere to 15 percent of the market within 18 months and now employing 1,700 people.

Virgin Blue's target of 50 percent of the market in five years was "a realistic one," he said. ***AFP***

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dti
DEPARTMENT OF
TRADE & INDUSTRY
PHILIPPINES

IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION FOR GENERAL SAFEGUARD MEASURES AGAINST THE IMPORTATION OF CERAMIC FLOOR AND WALLTILES FROM VARIOUS COUNTRIES
(SAFEGUARD CASE NO. 01-2001)

Ceramic Tiles Manufacturers Association
Protestant
x---x

DECISION

On 22 May 2001, the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) accepted a properly documented application from the Philippine ceramic tile industry alleging that ceramic tiles is being imported into the Philippines in such increased quantities as to be a substantial cause of serious injury or threat thereof to the domestic industry within the meaning of Republic Act (R.A.) 8800, otherwise known as the "Safeguard Measures Act." The application sought the imposition of provisional and definitive general safeguard measures on imports of ceramic floor and wall tiles, glazed or unglazed, classified under HS Codes 6907.9000 and 6908.9000 of the Tariff and Customs Code, respectively.

The DTI made a positive preliminary determination on the application and in accordance with Section 8 of RA 8800, found that "critical circumstances" existed which justified the imposition of provisional measures equivalent to P5.40/kg. not exceeding 200 days from the date of issuance by the Bureau of Customs (BOC) of the implementing Customs Memorandum Order (CMO). The BOC issued CMO No. 4-2002 on 4 January 2002 to implement the said DTI Order. The DTI's report was forwarded to the Tariff Commission as required by Section 7 for formal investigation.

On 27 March 2002, DTI received the Tariff Commission's Formal Investigation Report on the said application. The Tariff Commission found that:

1. The circumstances provided in Article XIX of GATT 1994 need not be demonstrated since the product under consideration (ceramic tiles) is not the subject of any Philippine obligation or tariff concession under the WTO Agreement. Nonetheless, such inquiry is governed by the national legislation (RA 8800) and the terms and conditions of the Agreement on Safeguards.
2. The collective output of the two (2) applicant companies constitutes a major proportion of the total domestic production of ceramic tiles.
3. Locally produced ceramic tile is deemed "like product" to imported ceramic tile.
4. Ceramic tiles are being imported into the Philippines in increased quantities, both in absolute terms and relative to domestic production, starting in 2000. The increase in volume of imports is recent, sharp and significant as to cause serious injury to the domestic industry.
5. The industry suffered and is suffering significant overall impairment in its condition in terms of loss of market share; inability to increase production and sales volume despite the increase in demand; decline in employment; underutilization of capacity; and huge losses in operations.
6. While there are other factors which contributed to the overall impairment in the position of the domestic industry, the Commission considers that cheap imports in increased quantities were the dominant cause of serious injury to the domestic ceramic tile industry.

The existence of a causal link between the increased imports of ceramic floor and wall tiles and serious injury to the domestic industry having been established, the Commission recommended the imposition of definitive general safeguard measures in the form of a tariff-rate quota and a specific duty on imported ceramic floor and wall tiles.

Section 5 of RA 8800 states:

> **"The Secretary shall apply a general safeguard measure upon a positive final determination of the Commission that a product is being imported into the country in increased quantities, whether absolute or relative to the domestic production, as to be a substantial cause of serious injury or threat thereof to the domestic industry; however, in the case of non-agricultural products, the Secretary shall first establish that the application of such safeguard measures will be in the public interest."**

Accordingly, The DTI has reviewed the Commission's findings and recommendations and has established that the application of safeguard measures shall be in the public interest.

IN VIEW THEREOF, and in accordance with Section 13 of RA 8800, the following is hereby issued:

1. A definitive safeguard duty in the amount of P5.40/kg for the first year, P 4.30/kg for the second year and P 3.50/kg for the third year shall be imposed on imported ceramic floor and wall tiles from various countries. The first year of implementation of the definitive safeguard measure shall include the period in which the provisional safeguard duty took effect i.e. 9 January 2002, the date of the issuance of Customs Memorandum Order No. 4-2002.
2. The ceramic tiles, however, from Japan and the member states of the European Union, which cannot be considered "like product or directly competitive product" as defined in Section 4 of RA 8800, are excluded from the imposition of general safeguard duty.
3. Pursuant to Section 13 of RA 8800 and Rule 13.1.d of its IRR, **"a general safeguard measure shall not be applied to a product originating from a developing country if its share to total Philippine imports of the said product is less than three percent (3%): Provided, however, that developing countries with less than three percent (3%) share collectively account for not more than nine percent (9%) of the total Philippine imports of the product concerned"**, the following countries listed below are also excluded from the imposition of the general safeguard duty on ceramic floor and wall tiles:

East & Southern Africa	West Africa	North Africa	South Asia
Angola Botswana Burundi Comoros Congo, Dem. Rep. Djibouti Eritrea Ethiopia Kenya Lesotho Madagascar Malawi Mauritius Mozambique Namibia Reunion Rwanda Seychelles Somalia South Africa Sudan Swaziland Tanzania Uganda Zambia Zimbabwe	Benin Burkina Faso Cameroon Cape Verde Central African Rep. Chad Congo, Rep. Cote d' Ivoire Equatorial Guinea Gabon Gambia, The Ghana Guinea Guinea-Bissau Liberia Mali Mauritania Niger Nigeria Sao Tome & Principe Senegal Sierra Leone Togo	Algeria Egypt, Arab Rep. Libya Morocco Tunisia	Afghanistan Bangladesh Bhutan British Indian Ocean Territory East Timor India Maldives Nepal Pakistan Sri Lanka

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All cash bonds that may have been imposed on shipments originating from countries listed above which entered in or are withdrawn from warehouses in the Philippines for consumption starting **9 January 2002**, the date of the effectivity of CMO 4-2002, shall be immediately returned to the concerned importer.

The notification and consultation requirements of Article 12 of the WTO Safeguards Agreement and Section 17 of RA 8800 and its IRR shall be complied with.

Imports originating from ASEAN Member states shall be governed by the provisions of Articles 6 and 8 of the Agreement on the CEPT Scheme.

The application of the definitive general safeguard measure shall be monitored and reviewed in accordance with Rules 15 and 16 of RA 8800.

Let this Decision be published in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

SO ORDERED.

11 April 2002

MAR ROXAS
Secretary

JEON: New South Korean finance and economy minister. REUTERS

Asean GDP may rise due to China

SINGAPORE—The Association of Southeast Asian Nations would see its gross domestic product increased by 0.9 percent per year if it expands a free-trade pact to include China, a Singaporean official said Monday.

China could expect additional annual growth of 0.3 percent, Singaporean Minister for the Environment Lim Swee Say said in a speech advocating such an arrangement as a way of reviving the regional economy.

Asean's 10-member states agreed with China last November to work toward creating a single free-trade area within the next 10 years.

It would be the world's largest, with a combined market of 1.7 billion people and gross domestic product of $2 trillion.

The association—which comprises Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Burma, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam—formally put its own free-trade area into effect in January.

Some of the countries fear that expanding that area to include China would flood the region with cheap Chinese goods and make Southeast Asia less attractive to foreign investors.

Lim argued, however, that an increasingly accessible China would be good for the economies of the entire region. Tiny, trade-dependent Singapore is Asean's most vocal supporter of free trade.

"When a country opens up, its trade with its neighbor inevitably increases and thus everyone benefits," he said.

China attracts about 50 percent of the direct foreign investment in Asia, excluding Japan, he said, adding that the Asean nations combined garner only 20 percent. *AP*

Korean president names new economic chief

SEOUL—South Korean President Kim Dae-jung on Monday named a reformist as the new finance and economy minister, seeking to demonstrate his determination to press ahead with an overhaul of the economy.

Jeon Yun-churl, chief of the presidential staff, replaced Jin Nyum who quit Saturday to take part in provincial elections.

The president's office said Jeon, 62, has the right qualifications to pursue reforms.

"He is the right man to sustain the government's economic reform policies with consistency and lead the economic team smoothly," presidential spokesperson Park Sun-sook said.

Jeon is a career bureaucrat who has spent most of his time in budget and consumer-related offices.

He led a drive to reform South Korea's family-controlled conglomerates, known as chaebol, while serving as chairman of the Fair Trade Commission for three years from 1997 when South Korea was hit by the Asian financial crisis.

As planning and budget minister from 2000, he pushed for the restructuring of debt-stricken state firms. *AFP*

Japan's finance watchdog hopes banks will get tougher on loans

TOKYO—Regional Japanese banks should tighten bad loan evaluations in line with major lenders, a top financial official said Monday, as Japan struggles to clean up the debt-laden sector.

"We will continue regular inspections into regional banks, but this is usually conducted on a basis of self evaluation," Shoji Mori, commissioner of the Financial Services Agency (FSA) told AFP's financial subsidiary AFX-News.

"So, I'm hoping more regional banks self-evaluate their bad loans as done by the major banks under the special inspection scheme," he said.

The FSA released the results on Friday last week of a long-awaited probe into Japan's 13 largest lenders.

The results showed the banks wrote off bad loans worth 7.8 trillion yen ($59.1 billion) in the year to March, up 1.4 trillion yen from an estimate made by the lenders in November, and a rise of 1.9 trillion yen from a forecast in September, made before the FSA probe began.

"The inspection into regional banks will not be a special inspection similar to that conducted on major banks," said Mori.

"But I believe even under the regular inspection scheme, regional banks could follow the recent move by major banks."

Friday's announcement, however, failed to instill confidence in the troubled banking sector, as the government said the level of bad loans was not likely to fall in the next one or two years.

"And that is assuming there will be a moderate recovery in the economy," said Brian Waterhouse, a banking analyst at HSBC Securities.

Tokyo also said there was no need for a fresh injection of public funds into the banks, despite all four mega-lenders—including the world's largest bank in terms of assets, Mizuho Holdings Inc.—forecasting massive losses for fiscal 2001.

Banking stocks slumped Monday morning on disappointment in the anti-climatic report, dealers said.

Mizuho fell 13,000 yen to 286,000, Mitsubishi-Tokyo Financial Group Inc. lost 11,000 to 846,000, UFJ Holdings Inc. was off 10,000 at 307,000 and Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corp. slipped 12 to 547.

The declines contrasted with a one-percent rise in the Nikkei-225 average of the Tokyo Stock Exchange, which ended the early session up 114.74 points at 11,077.72.

The government has capped an unlimited guarantee on time deposits held at banks at 10 million yen, triggering concern depositors may withdraw funds from smaller, weaker banks.

Growing concern in the stability of the financial system, exasperated by a string of technical problems suffered by Mizuho, would also prompt individuals to take their money from riskier banks, analysts said.

"The real danger to the banking system comes from a combination of smaller banks that are severely undercapitalized (forcing people) to shift their funds," said Waterhouse.

"What kills banks is not bad loans but a lack of liquidity. It's conceivable it could happen to any bank," he said. *AFP*

Sony, GE Capital in final discussions on sale of shares in insurance firm

TOKYO—Sony Corp. is in final talks to sell a majority stake in its insurance subsidiary Sony Life Insurance Co. Ltd to GE Capital Corp., the financial services arm of General Electric Co., a Japanese newspaper said.

The Sankei Shimbun said on Monday that Japan's consumer electronics giant, which said last week it was talking to various US and European insurers, could sell the stake for between 500 billion and 800 billion yen ($3.8 billion to $6.1 billion).

Such a deal would allow Sony to hand over management of the assets to a more experienced firm and double GE Capital's operations in Japan.

"GE wants to see their life insurance business grow here," said Edward Gordon, analyst at WestLB Panmure. "And Sony has been very conscious of the cost of infrastructure."

A strong foreign player would also spur consolidation in Japan's life insurance industry, which has been struggling to cope with a dwindling pool of policyholders and low returns on investments after a decade of weak economic growth.

Sony, a consumer electronics giant known for its PlayStation video game machines, VAIO PCs and AIBO pet robot dogs, has been branching into financial services in recent years, funding online Japanese brokerage Monex Inc. and launching an Internet bank in 2001.

GE Capital came to Japan in 1998 and established GE Edison Life Insurance Co. as a joint venture with Toho Mutual Life Insurance Co., which it absorbed a year later after the Japanese life insurer failed.

In terms of assets, the two are a close match. Sony Life had 1.6 trillion yen ($12.1 billion) in assets at the end of 2001, while GE Edison Life had 2.17 trillion yen in assets at the end of its last reporting period on Sept. 30.

The Sankei Shimbun report said that Sony decided to sell a majority stake in the unit since it was trying to specialize in cost-efficient Internet-based financial services.

Currently, Sony Life has about 4,400 sales representatives compared to GE Edison Life's 4,100.

Sony president Kunitake Ando said in a statement last week the company was "in talks with several US and European insurers aimed at further developing the operational base of Sony Life."

A spokesperson declined to comment directly on Monday's report, reiterating that Sony was talking to various parties and could not identify them. *Reuters*

American cities have too much office space

SAN FRANCISCO—Economists see signs the recession is abating, but that's little consolation to those who own office space in America's cities, where rents are plummeting because of the biggest glut of commercial real estate in years.

Even as US companies are adding jobs and home sales remain brisk, the nation's office vacancy rate hit 14.7 percent in the first quarter—the highest since the mid-1990s, according to Reis Inc., a New York real estate investment firm.

It might be hard to summon sympathy for landlords, but thinned-out business districts create plenty of pain for other people—and provide a snapshot of the state of the economic recovery.

"More empty buildings mean less business for everything to coffee stands to small restaurants, cafés, business services, personal services," said business consultant Tapan Munroe, former chief economist for Pacific Gas & Electric Co.

Perhaps no place illustrates the issue as vividly as San Francisco, which is still marveling at how fast the dotcom boom went bust.

A record 21 percent of the city's office space is vacant, nearly three times the rate at this time last year, according to the Grubb & Ellis real estate company.

In the South of Market area, the former warehouse district that became known as Multimedia Gulch during the dotcom heyday, the vacancy rate is a staggering 49 percent. It was close to zero two years ago, said Colin Yasukochi, a Grubb & Ellis research director.

Back then, Enzo's Ristorante in the heart of the area used to serve lunch to 90 people a day. The answering machine often would be full with reservation requests when owner Renzo Romero arrived at the Italian joint at 9 a.m.

Romero has since reduced his midday staff from eight people to four and sometimes gets as few as 10 lunchtime customers a day.

"It used to be like a flea market around here, with so many people walking around," Romero said. "Now, Monday through Thursday is like a Sunday. All the restaurants are taking a big hit." *AP*

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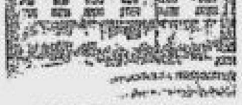

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Republic of the Philippines
Local Civil Registry Office
Province of Misamis Oriental
Cagayan de Oro City

In the Matter of the Change of Name
in the Certificate of Live Birth
of Jaime Palomares Cantones

Petition Entry No. ________

NOTICE OF PUBLICATION

The public is hereby notified that Jaime Palomares Cantones has filed with this Office a petition for change of first name from "Anastacio" to "Jaime" in the Certificate of Live Birth of Jaime Palomares Cantones.

At the expense of the petitioner, let a copy of this petition be published at least once a week for two (2) consecutive weeks in a newspaper of national circulation. Any person having knowledge and/or claiming interest or may be adversely affected by said petition may, within fifteen (15) calendar days, file his written opposition with this office.

(Sgd.) LEO G. WABE
City Civil Registrar

(PDI – Apr. 16 & 23, 2002)

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Bring along C.V. and latest 2x2 photo when called for an interview.

Republic of the Philippines
City Civil Registrar's Office
City of Davao

NOTICE FOR PUBLICATION

In compliance with Section 5 of R.A. Act No. 9048, a notice is hereby served to the public that **Lucita A. Tadlas-Rodriguez** has filed with this Office a petition for change of first name from Lustolia to Lucita in the birth certificate of **Lustolia A. Tadlas** who was born on **November 9, 1945** at Cotabato City and whose parents are **Guillermo C. Tadlas** and **Lourdes Alameda.**

Any person adversely affected by said petition may file his written opposition with this Office not later than **April 23, 2002.**

(Sgd.) **REMEDIOS ISRAEL-SALINGAY**
City Civil Registrar

(PDI - April 16, 2002)

DBP Development Bank of the Philippines

INVITATION TO BID

The Development Bank of the Philippines will receive sealed bids on 30 April 2002 at 2:00 p.m. at the Auditorium of the DBP Head Office, Sen. Gil J. Puyat Ave. cor. Makati Avenue, Makati City for the following properties on **CASH BASIS:**

CODE	LOCATION	DESCRIPTION	MINIMUM BID
REAL ESTATE			
METRO MANILA			
MEE-159	No. 8 Dona Alicia St., INA Executive Homes I, Levitown Estate Subd., Brgy. Don Bosco, Parañaque City	190 m² residential lot (TCT No. 144520) with buildings and improvements.	P 1,202,500.00
LDA-106	No. 13 Ubas St., Dona Josefa Subd., Brgy. Almanza, Las Piñas City	240 m² residential lot (TCT No. 65213) with building and improvements.	P 1,174,500.00
LRD-121-A	Corner Chestnut and Cherry Sts., Rainbow Village 5 Phase II, Bagumbong, Caloocan City	295 m² residential lot (TCT No. C-342819).	P 664,000.00
LTY-102	Bo. San Roque, Tangos, Navotas	436 m² interior residential lot (TCT No. 262159).	P 622,000.00
LJG-149	Lot 1 Blk. 18, cor. Lots 13 & 19, Golden Acres Subd., Talon Singko,Las Piñas City	236 m² residential lot (TCT No. 75082).	P 499,000.00
MEE-145	Corner of Road Lot 11 & 27, Congressional Model Subd., Camarin, Caloocan City	228 m² vacant residential lot (TCT No. 334416).	P 405,000.00
LTY-103	Bo. San Roque, Tangos, Navotas	242 m² residential lot (TCT No. 262158) with building and improvements.	P 386,000.00
BULACAN			
LTY-67	1729 Villarica Homes, Bo. Lolomboy, Bocaue	257 m² residential lot (TCT No. T-324365) with building and improvements	P 1,553,200.00
LJG-134	Bancal Ext., Bancal, Meycauayan	152 m² residential lot (TCT No. T-363653) with building and improvements.	P 698,800.00
VPI-31	G.L. Jaena St., Cityland, Green Breeze Village I, Pulong Buhangin, Sta. Maria	200 m² residential lot (TCT No. T-295185 M).	P 185,000.00
CAVITE			
MGT-165	Bo. Talon, Amadeo,	2,322 m² untilled agro-residential lot (TD No. 97-12589) with building.	P 1,004,000.00
LRD-121-B	Corner Secul and Sicily Sts., Pallas Athena Executive Subd., Phase II, Anabu, Imus	180 m² vacant residential lot (TCT No. T-917917).	P 567,000.00
LRD-121-C	Sicily St., Pallas Athena Executive Subd., Phase II, Anabu, Imus	150 m² vacant residential lot (TCT No. T-917918).	P 432,000.00
LAGUNA			
LJG-104	Camanigue St., Elvinda Village, Phase IV, San Vicente, San Pedro	192 m² vacant residential lot (TCT No. T-457146).	P 507,000.00
QUEZON			
LJG-150	Brgy. Sampaloc I, Sariaya	10,000 m² agricultural lot (TCT No. T-367896).	P 880,000.00
RIZAL			
MMC-156	Bo. San Isidro, Antipolo City	2,537 m² adjoining two (2) parcels interior vacant farm lots (TCT Nos. 373101 & 373102).	P 1,267,800.00
VJC-97	Deerwood St., Camden Ext., Saint Martin de Porres, Brookside Hills, Twin Peak, Brgy. Bulao, Antipolo City	210 m² residential lot (TCT No. 385002) with building and improvement.	P 855,000.00
ZAMBALES			
LJG-147	Bo. Sinabacan, Candelaria	174,439 m² fishpond (TCT Nos. T-53917 to T-53921).	P 6,804,800.00
CHATTELS (Sale on "as-is, where-is" basis)			
MBL-167	La Campana Compound, EDSA, Balintawak, Quezon City	1 unit Double Cab Pick-up, MAZDA.	P 155,000.00
LJG-131a to h	La Campana Compound, EDSA, Balintawak, Quezon City	8 units various machinery and equipment used in the fabrication of local spare parts of industrial machines. (Sale on per unit basis)	P 10,700.00 to 131,200.00

DBP RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, TO WAIVE ANY FORMALITY THEREIN, OR TO ACCEPT SUCH BIDS AS MAY BE CONSIDERED MOST ADVANTAGEOUS TO THE BANK. THE DECISION OF THE BANK IS FINAL AND BINDING.

For inquiries, please call telephone numbers:
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(PDI - April 15 & 18, 2002)

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FR. PHILIP J. CALDERONE, S.J.

was called home to the Lord on Sunday, 14 April 2002.

Wake: Oratory of St. Ignatius at Loyola House of Studies, Ateneo de Manila University Campus, Loyola Heights, Quezon City. Concelebrated Mass every evening at 8:00 p.m.

Funeral Mass: at 8:00 a.m. on Thursday, 18 April 2002 in the Oratory of St. Ignatius, Loyola House of Studies.

Interment: Sacred Heart Novitiate Cemetery, Novaliches, Quezon City, immediately after the Funeral Ma ..

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I am
the way,
the truth
and
the life.
No one
comes
to the
Father
except
through
Me.
John 14:6

> *"Eye has not seen, ear has not heard, nor has it so much as dawned on man what God has prepared for those who love Him."*
>
> I Corinthians 2:9

Our Dearly Beloved Papa

ATTY. RAMON F. ISHIWATA, SR.

Peacefully joined his Creator on April 13, 2002 at the age of 70.

His wife **Asuncion**; loving children and in-laws **Butch**, **Paulette** and **Al**, **Norman**, **Irene**, **Ramon Jr.**, and **Griselda**; his grandchildren, nephews and nieces, other relatives and friends request the kind readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the Faith Chapel of Don Bosco Parish, Makati City.

Interment will be on Wednesday, April 17, 2002 after the 8:00 a.m. Mass at the Manila Memorial Park, Sucat, Parañaque City.

JOSE PONCE REYES

Peacefully joined hs Creator on April 13, 2002 at the age of 83.

His bereaved wife **PURA**; children **BENNY** & **CHATO**, **SONNY** & **CYNTHIA**, **JUN** & **BING**; sister **Conchita**; grandchildren, nephews and nieces, other relatives and friends request the readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at San Francisco Chapel, Santuario de San Antonio, McKinley Road, Forbes Park, Makati City.

Interment will be on Friday, April 19, 2002 at Everest Memorial Park, Susana Heights, Muntinlupa City after the 2:00 p.m. Mass.

TEODORA PINEDA PABUSTAN

(Widow of **Ruperto R. Pabustan**)

Died peacefully in the Grace of our Lord on April 13, 2002 at the age of 96.

Her bereaved children **Alfredo** (†) and **Susana** (†), **Benjamin**, **Conchita** and **Carlos dela Cruz**, **Dolores** and **Oscar Rodriguez**, **Ernesto** and **Adoracion**, **Fe**, **Gloria**, **Herminia** and **Wilfredo Concepcion**, **Isabelita** and **Max Blodgett** and **Jose** and **Cynthia**; together with her grandchildren, great grandchildren and great great grandchildren request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Interment will be on Thursday, April 18, 2002 after the 3:00 p.m. Mass at the God Shepherd Memorial Park, City of San Fernando, Pampanga, where her remains lie in state.

MILAGROS CAMBA MAGLANOC

of Bani, Pangasinan

Has joined our Creator on April 14, 2002 at the age of 68.

Her bereaved husband **Jesus**; daughters **Loremagne**, **Charmagne**, **Monique**, **Romagne**, **Sulamagne**, **Mylamagne**; and sons **Enrique**, **Luisito**, **Jesse** and **Pancho**; brothers **Calvin** (†), **Abraham** (†), **Jaime Arthur** (†); and sisters **Aurora**, **Glory**, **Brenda** and **Philip**; relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at Don Bosco Chapel, Pasay Road, Makati City.

Interment to be announced later.

Pablo Tolosa Manalang

He died in the Grace of our Lord on April 13, 2002 at the age of 86.

His loving family **Rustica**, **Lily**, **Dick**, **Lito**, **Chuchi** (†), **Eddie**, **Jacinta**, **Paulette**, **Pilar**, **Pompeyo**, **Pam**, **Nora**, **Abet** (†), **Lito**, **Arthur**, **Julie**, **Nora**, **Mario**, **Luis**, **Rose** and **Baby**; grandchildren, great grandchildren; his brother **Carl**; sister **Ely**; in-laws, nephews, nieces, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Arlington Memorial Chapel, Quezon City.

Funeral Mass will be celebrated at Arlington at 8:00 AM on Saturday, April 20, 2002. Interment will immediately follow at Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina.

The Board of Trustees, Management and Staff of

THE **INSULAR LIFE**
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condole with the family of

MARIO D. CAMACHO

Member of its Board of Trustees

who joined our Creator on April 12, 2002.

His remains lie in state at the St. Jerome and Sta. Susanna Multi-Purpose Hall, Ayala Alabang, Muntinlupa. A Mass will be celebrated at the St. Jerome Church at 2:00 p.m. today, Tuesday, April 16, 2002, after which interment will take place at Loyola Memorial Park, Sucat, Parañaque.

COL. MANUEL A. ACOSTA

President, PMA Class 1940

Peacefully joined our Creator and his devoted wife, Rosita Henson Acosta, on April 14, 2002 at the age of 85.

His bereaved children **Arturo**, **Manuel Jr.** and **Soledad Santiago**, **Asuncion** (†), **Roberto** and **Jennifer Dimayuga**, **Alicia** and **Rolando Castro**; grandchildren **Joaquin**, **Ma. Beatriz**, **Ma. Cristina**, **Miguel**, **Carlos**, **Enrique**, and **Luis**; brother **Pascual**; sisters-in-law **Lourdes I. Acosta** and **Ramona H. Urbano**; brother-in-law **Amadeo Urbano**; nephews, nieces, relatives and friends request prayers for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Santuario de San Jose, Duke Street, Greenhills East, Mandaluyong City.

Interment will be on Thursday, April 18, 2002, at Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina City after the 8:00 a.m. Mass at Santuario de San Jose.

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on the First Death Anniversary of

Elizabeth Fernandez Mamenta

of Tayug, Pangasinan and
Brookesville, Florida, USA

Died April 16, 2001

St. Joseph's College High School '76
Mapua BS Management & Industrial Engineer '81
Pennsylvania State University, Master Regional Planning '85

Masses will be offered at the following churches:

Sta. Cruz Church, Manila	1:00 PM
Quiapo Church, Manila	9:00 AM
St. Paul the Apostle, Timog Avenue, Quezon City	6:00 PM
St. Patrick Church, Tayug, Pangasinan	6:00 AM

Her family, mother **Lydia**; sister **Marilou**; brother **Jong**; nephews and nieces request readers to remember **Beth** in their prayers.

REALESTATE

Editor **Cesar D. Mangawang**

Industrial park set-up puts RP in world map

By Tessa R. Salazar

MOST people think that the Philippines, compared to industrialized countries like the United States, are 20 years behind in industrial development.

Don't tell that to the industrialists. For them and their industrial estates, however, the country is at par with the industrialized countries.

Science Park of the Philippines Inc. vice president for marketing Eduardo C. Balingit Jr. told the INQUIRER that the country is already in the international map in terms of industrial park facilities. Most Filipinos, however, just don't realize this as they are stuck with the negative image of the country.

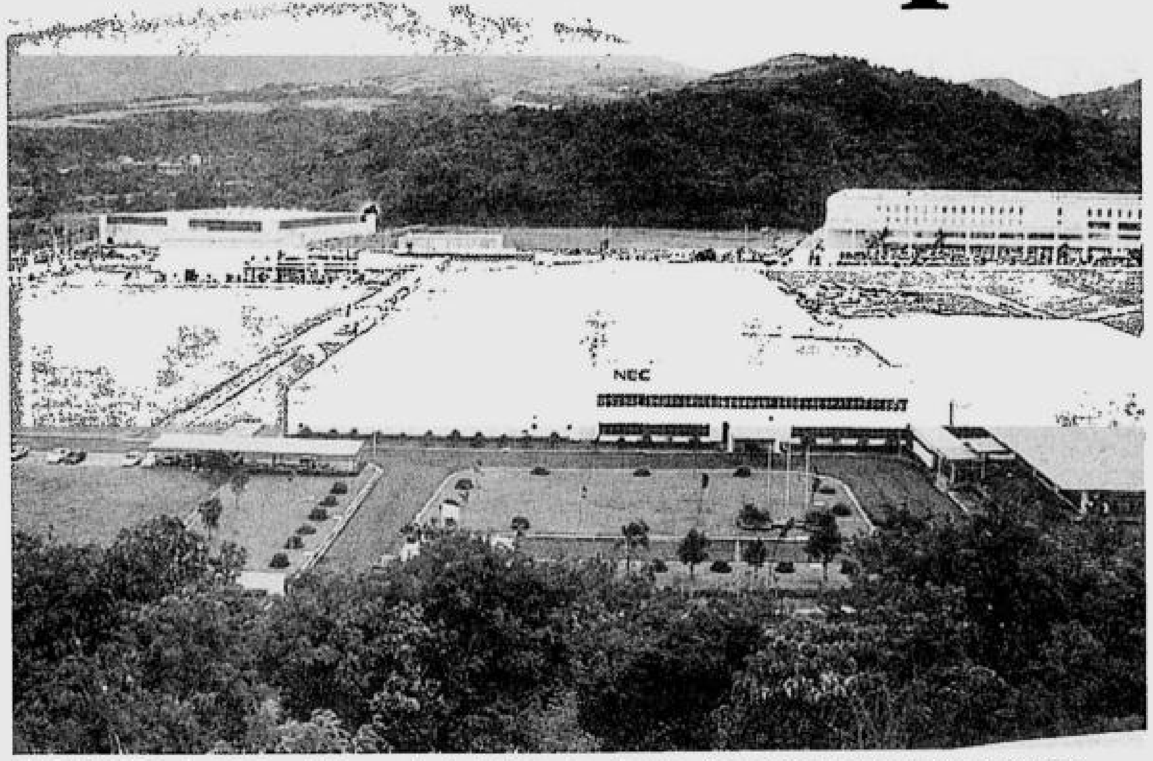
The SPPI is the developer and manager of several industrial parks in the country. The parks cater to clean and nonpolluting manufacturing operations as well as support industries. They are dedicated to cômpanies that strongly advocate environment-friendly operations. The SPPI said, however, that in the case of Hermosa Ecozone Industrial Park in Bataan, heavy industries are still welcome.

Surprised

Balingit cited several of his foreign visitors who were surprised to see industrial estates offering complete and advanced infrastructure and facilities to support manufacturing operations. The SPPI boasts of industrial parks with abundant supply of power or energy, water and telecommunications.

Balingit cited an international semiconductor company that now houses two factories in the industrial parks in Cabuyao and Calamba.

The needed machine and its operators are all from the United Kingdom. After sending a batch of Filipino engineers for a month of training and eventually bringing the machine into its Philippine manufacturing plant, the plant has exceeded the capacity that the UK counterpart has been producing.



THE LIGHT Industrial and Science Park in Calamba, Laguna, is a series of industrial parks that places the country in the international map, says developer Science Park of the Philippines.

World-class status

He said most foreign company delegates who visit the country are quite surprised to see world-class industrial parks.

Recently, he said, Moody's came over to check the country's credit standing and evaluate the country's situation in terms of credit. Moody's, at that time, was about to give a negative impression on the economic potential of the country.

He claimed it was also that time when Moody's delegates commended the SPPI for its world-class facilities available to local and manufacturing companies.

Moody's Investors Service was in the news recently after it upgraded its credit outlook on the Philippines to stable from negative. It cited President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's efforts to put the country on track to fiscal soundness and sustainable growth. Balingit said that while the industrial parks are dependent on foreign direct investment, it is always good to have the industrial estates available as soon as the foreign investors come in.

MAKING industrial parks 'homely' also means providing park lagoons inside.

"The industrial estates want to make sure that they support the government's move to invite foreign companies to invest in the Philippines," he said.

The government provided incentives for all companies that are serving the export market. The Philippine Economic Zone Authority (Peza) has provided income tax holidays for four years for companies that would be going into exports.

Science parks are found mostly in the countryside. The idea, added Balingit, is to bring development outside Metro Manila and provide employment to the communities.

Making global manufacturers feel at home

INDUSTRIAL estates are much like residential subdivisions.

If residential subdivisions are where people and families live in, industrial estates are home to industrialists and their factories.

The factories are called locators. An industrial estate, in essence, provides a location for local and foreign companies to operate in the Philippines.

Other industrial parks, however, do not just settle for merely providing vast tracts of land for its locators. Science Park of the Philippines Inc., a private industrial estate developer and manager, said industrial parks should be strategically located and easily accessible to the country's financial and industrial centers, while at the same time they are set apart from the noise and pollution of the cities.

Perfect blend

The SPPI boasts that all its industrial parks are within close proximity of the country's most modern communities for people of various income levels. This means being near first-class housing subdivisions and condominium apartments. Furthermore, its industrial parks also have modern commercial and leisure establishments, schools and cultural facilities, and sports and country clubs. In effect, local and foreign expatriates are provided a perfect blend of business and leisure facilities.

SPPI vice president for marketing Edilberto C. Balingit Jr. said in an interview that SPPI's Light Industrial and Science Park 1, located in Cabuyao, Laguna, is large at 173 hectares. The Light Industrial and Science Park in Calamba is 68 hectares, while its LISP 3 in Batangas is 133 hectares.

SPPI's Cebu Light and Industrial Park is 70 hectares. An upcoming science park in Hermoso, Bataan, which is in the process of engineering design, is about 175 hectares.

LSPI1 and 2 are already 100 percent occupied by foreign and local locators while there are still available land for LISP3 and the Cebu industrial park.

Positive development

Creating an industrial estate include buying raw lands, developing areas, providing roads and fencing of properties, just like the process of developing a residential subdivision. But it doesn't end there.

The SPPI, for instance, creates community relation activities in some areas of development where there are already existing communities in the area. It develops livelihood programs and additional training skills for the people in the community to improve their chances of better employment.

The activities are intended for the surrounding communities to have positive effects, said Balingit. Because of the community-relation activity, people in the area look at industrial estates as a positive development in their community, he said. For its community projects, the SPPI was awarded by the Philippine Economic Zone Authority for three straight years and has been accorded one hall of fame award for its community projects.

Environment-conscious

Industrial estates—which cater to international manufacturing companies—are expected to be environment-conscious, said Balingit. As such, wastes in these facilities don't go out untreated.

Just like residential subdivision developers, industrial estate developers provide utilities like water, roads, communication and power lines—and more. A centralized wastewater treatment plant is a prerequisite. Factory discharges are monitored. Wastewater is treated before being discharged to large bodies of water such as the Laguna de Bay.

Creating an industrial estate costs a lot more than developing a residential subdivision, however. Unlike an 8-meter-wide road in subdivisions, private industrial estates such as the ones SPPI has developed have roads that are at least 22 meters wide as their main artery. Their secondary roads are at least 16 meters wide.

Tessa R. Salazar

TOPPING-OFF RITES

Premier urban property developer Megaworld Corp. recently held simple topping-off rites to mark the structural completion of the 29-story second tower of Paseo Parkview. From left are Jacinto Divinagracia, International Elevator & Equipment senior manager; engineer Gregorio Origenes, G.E. Origenes & Associates principal; Rosemarie Cambaliza, Megaworld VP for sales and marketing; Canuto Oreta, A.M. Oreta & Co. president; and architect Jose Recio, Recio + Casas Inc. principal.

CONSTRUCTSCOPE

Golf Hill Terraces Phase 3 at finishing stage

PREMIER urban property developer Megaworld Corp. is now proceeding with key interior and exterior finishing works for the structurally complete Phase 3 of Golf Hill Terraces, a posh residential development located near the Capitol Hills Golf and Country Club in Quezon City. The development's latest phase consists of four new clusters of three-story residential buildings that will add 225 more residences ranging from studio to one- and two-bedroom units. Phase 3 is scheduled for completion and turnover by the second quarter of 2003. Golf Hill Terraces is near schools, commercial centers and business districts. Residential amenities include a tennis court, swimming pools for adults and children, a club house and an aerobics room.

Klappstuhl summer in the country sale

LIGHT, airy, rustic pieces of furniture—comfortably designed for Philippine homes—are on sale at Klappstuhl. Up to 15 percent discounts are offered at Klappstuhl's Summer in the Country Sale, which runs until the end of the month. Klappstuhl outlets are located in Robinsons Galleria and SM North Edsa.

CENTRALIZED HOME FINANCING SCHEME

Zialcita: SSS, GSIS, Pag-Ibig won't lose

REP. Eduardo C. Zialcita (Las Piñas) yesterday belied a news report that the Social Security System, Government Service Insurance System and Pag-Ibig Fund are being required to "contribute" funds for the operation of the Department of Housing under the bill pending before the House of Representatives.

Zialcita, principal author of the bill, said:

"Under the housing department bill, the SSS, GSIS and Pag-Ibig Fund are being required to invest in sovereign-guaranteed, tax-free, interest-bearing and fully marketable government housing bonds that assure for them full repayment of principal and interest after two to five years.

"The funds that will be generated out of these government housing bonds will be used exclusively for a homebuyer financing assistance program whose beneficiaries are not only the members of these institutions but all eligible homeless income-earning citizens as well.

Misquote

"The report that these institutions are being required to finance the operation of the proposed Department of Housing is therefore erroneous. We can only hope that this is due to a misquote rather than to a failure of the SSS and GSIS presidents to fully appreciate the importance of the proposed involvement of their respective institutions.

"The innovative investment scheme under this proposed law has been devised precisely to correct and preclude the flaws of previous home lending programs, instituted purely by executive fiat, which resulted in these institutions now being saddled by a huge portfolio of nonperforming assets.

ZIALCITA

"Previously, the housing funds of SSS, GSIS and Pag-Ibig Fund were channeled either to their direct home-lending operations or through the Unified Homelending Program. Either way, fund recovery depended solely on repayment of housing loans by the individual borrowers.

Assurance

"Under the new scheme provided in the bill, these institutions are assured of full recovery of investment, including interest, whether or not the individual housing loans are repaid. The relationship will not be between these institutions and the Department of Housing or the homelending institution such as the National Home Mortgage Finance Corp., nor between them and the individual borrowers. Rather, it will be between them and the government through the housing bonds with sovereign guarantee.

"The advantage of this new centralized funding scheme is that it not only frees these institutions from any risk of loss. It will also enable the government to service the housing needs of both the formal and informal sectors; and take full advantage of the cross-subsidy mechanism so socialized housing beneficiaries can be offered the lowest possible lending rate without need of government subsidy. It will allow for uniformity in homelending procedures and requirements. The considerable amount of funds to be generated out of 'fund pooling' will enable long-term programming of housing development by both the government and private sector. Homelending can be properly focused on prioritized areas and target beneficiaries. It will free SSS, GSIS and Pag-Ibig Fund from the administrative costs and burdens of direct homelending operations, and avoid competition among government financial institutions in marketing housing-based securities.

Erroneous

"It is also erroneous to say that this proposed investment scheme runs counter to their respective charters. For, Section 26 of RA 8282 directs the SSS to invest portions of its investment Reserve Fund in interest-bearing government-guaranteed bonds or securities with annual yields of at least 9 percent. Section 36 of RA 8291 also directs the GSIS to invest funds not needed to meet current obligations in interest-bearing government bonds or securities. And Section 4 of RA 7742 requires the Pag-Ibig Fund to invest not less than 70 percent of its investible funds in housing.

"We appreciate the zealousness of the leaders of SSS, GSIS and Pag-Ibig Fund in protecting the interest of their members. But surely, they cannot presume to have a greater concern than Congress itself, which enacted the very laws that create, and continue to safeguard, the integrity of these institutions.

"The SSS and GSIS charters were enacted by Congress with the welfare of the workers in mind. And this Housing bill is being proposed not only to advance their welfare in a major way by providing them the opportunity to acquire decent homes, but also to serve the overall national interest by catalyzing full economic recovery that will benefit everyone."

Doubtful merit

Zialcita also said the proposal to attach the Pag-Ibig Fund to the Department of Finance (DOF) rather than the Department of Housing is of doubtful merit.

The Pag-Ibig Fund was designed and created precisely as an anchor fund for housing, to generate funds for housing through a mutual fund system, hence the Pag-Ibig Fund charter requires that 70 percent of its funds be allocated to housing, Zialcita said.

It is, therefore, simply logical to attach the institution to a sectoral department that is concerned specifically with housing, rather than to the DOF which is concerned with the broad aspects of national finance or any other department with concerns other than housing, Zialcita added.

$865-M project extends LRT line to Cavite

By Charles E. Buban

CAVITE residents can expect a much convenient and hopefully a better way of commuting to Metro Manila and back as the Light Rail Transit extends its line all the way to Bacoor by 2005. In fact, if things work out well, the LRT line may even extend to Imus and Dasmariñas.

The US$865-million project will be spearheaded by the Light Rail Transit Authority that has announced its joint venture with Canadian firm, SNC-Lavalin International Inc. The National Economic and Development Authority (Neda) already approved the project late last year and construction will begin in November.

At present, the LRT line, which was the first to be constructed in Metro Manila, extends from Monumento to Baclaran only.

"The project is part of government's response to the growing transport needs of (people in) Metro Manila and its environs who demand for a faster and more convenient mode of transport. In our assessment, the commuter railway is the most efficient among the mass transit systems available," said Transportation Secretary Pantaleon Alvarez.

In addition to easing up the traffic problem in areas of Parañaque City, Las Piñas City and Bacoor in Cavite, the LRT 1 extension project is expected to bring in some P15 billion to the national coffers.

Speeding up initial work

Neda officials said it would be the Canadian partner's responsibility to source financing for the whole project but the government reserves the right to take out the loan. SNC-Lavalin is currently arranging bridge financing to speed up initial work on the extension. The total project cost covers both civil works and electromechanical systems plus interest during construction.

ALVAREZ

Initially, the extension project of the LRT-1 will construct an additional 12-km rail system starting from Baclaran station to Bacoor, Cavite.

SNC-Lavalin Group is one of the leading engineering and construction firms in the world and a key player in the ownership and management of infrastructure. The company provides engineering, procurement, construction, project management and project financing services to a variety of industry sectors, including chemicals and petroleum, mining and metallurgy, pharmaceuticals, agrifood, infrastructure and buildings, power, mass transit, environment, defense and telecommunications.

SNC-Lavalin has been active internationally for nearly 40 years and has built a network that spans every continent. Its workforce is located in offices across Canada and in about 30 other countries, and is currently engaged in projects in approximately 100 countries. SNC-Lavalin's business units worldwide are autonomous and have access to the global resources needed to assume total responsibility for every aspect of a project, on a fee-for-services, turnkey or concession basis, on its own or in partnership.

Joint venture

Under the Neda-approved deal, the government and the SNC-Lavalin will both contribute assets to the joint venture. Equitable sharing of revenue and risks from the integrated system operations will be proportionate to the value of contribution to the joint venture.

The LRTA contribution to the venture is the "use" of its assets. The agency retains ownership of the electromechanical system. The operations and maintenance of the integrated system will be jointly managed by franchise holder LRTA and SNC-Lavalin.

The system will be handed over to the LRTA for US$1 after 30 years. Number of passengers on the extended LRT-1 is estimated to reach 847,147 a day by year 2005; 987,919 by year 2010, and 1,112,024 by year 2015. The extension project is expected to produce an economic internal rate of return of 32 percent according to government estimate.

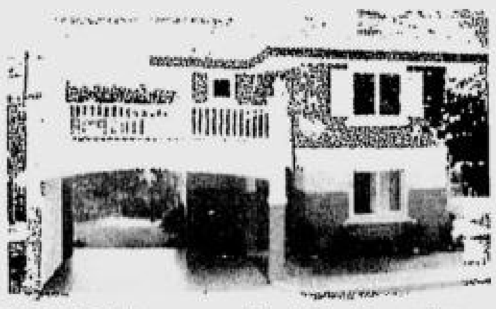
Ayala Land putting up 2 subdivisions in Antipolo

IT'S definitely welcome news for those who want to build their dream home in the hills of Antipolo. Real estate giant Ayala Land is putting up not just one but two subdivisions at the heart of Rizal's emerging urban center—the company's first residential projects in eastern Metro Manila.

It's a place where serenity is a way of life and Mother Nature, your next door neighbor. And that's exactly what St. Alexandra Estates—the latest subdivision project of Laguna Properties Holdings Inc. (LPHI), the mass housing arm of Ayala Land—promises.

Much the same can be said of St. Gabriel Heights—another LPHI offering—that is being built right next to St. Alexandra Estates on a 21-hectare property on the Teresa Provincial Road in Barangay Dalig, two kilometers from Antipolo City proper.

TEX 40 at St. Gabriel Heights


GRENADA house model at St. Alexandra Estates

Accessible

This Mediterranean- inspired community of two midrange residential subdivisions is accessible to the commercial and business districts of Ortigas and Makati, as well as exclusive schools such as UP, Ateneo, University of Asia and the Pacific, La Salle-Greenhills and Assumption.

It is located near the Yñares Sports Center (one of the venues of PBA games) and right in the middle of what is being developed as a business and commercial complex in Antipolo City.

Marks of excellence

Both projects will have facilities and amenities that bear the familiar Ayala Land marks of excellence such as charming gazebos, basketball courts and playground for family recreation. Of course, there's that refreshing cool breeze that makes the rolling hills of Antipolo an ideal nesting place.

Houses at St. Alexandra Estates are being built using the globally accepted French Phenix building system, which combines durability and space optimization. It is easy to expand the livable area without having to destroy or break walls.

Three basic types—Dominica (90-100 sq. m), Antigua (110-135 sq. m) and Grenada (135-165 sq. m)—will be made available and buyers are free to opt for a basic or a premier interior finishing.

On the other hand, St. Gabriel Heights homes are designed based on the world-class British building technology—TEX building system—which ensures that each structure is spacious and strong enough to last a lifetime. Buyers can choose from three types—TEX 40, TEX 49 and TEX 81 (with corresponding floor areas). Houses have finished exteriors of different color schemes as well as bare interiors.

Financing options

St. Alexandra Estates is offering 147 units with lot sizes ranging from 204 to 350 square meters with a price range of P3.6 million to P7.0 million, while St. Gabriel Heights has 167 units with lot sizes averaging from 149 and 276 square meters carrying a price from P1.5 million to P2 million.

What makes the two Antipolo subdivisions doubly desirable is LPHI's offering of 60 different payment schemes through its in-house financing. Apart from availing of zero down payment and longer payment terms, buyers have several financing options from banks and government loans.

California Garden Square on the rise

CALIFORNIA Garden Square, a multicluster residential community of Empire East Land Holdings Inc. in Mandaluyong City, has completed the excavation and foundation works for its four-building Anaheim cluster. Structural work is proceeding at the seventh level for the 12-story building 2 while buildings 1, 3 and 4 have been topped off at the sixth, twelfth and eighth floor, respectively.

California Garden Square features eight other clusters consisting of two-level, two-bedroom condo homes. Designed as an urban tropical paradise, it is located at the corner of Libertad and Calbayog streets near Edsa.

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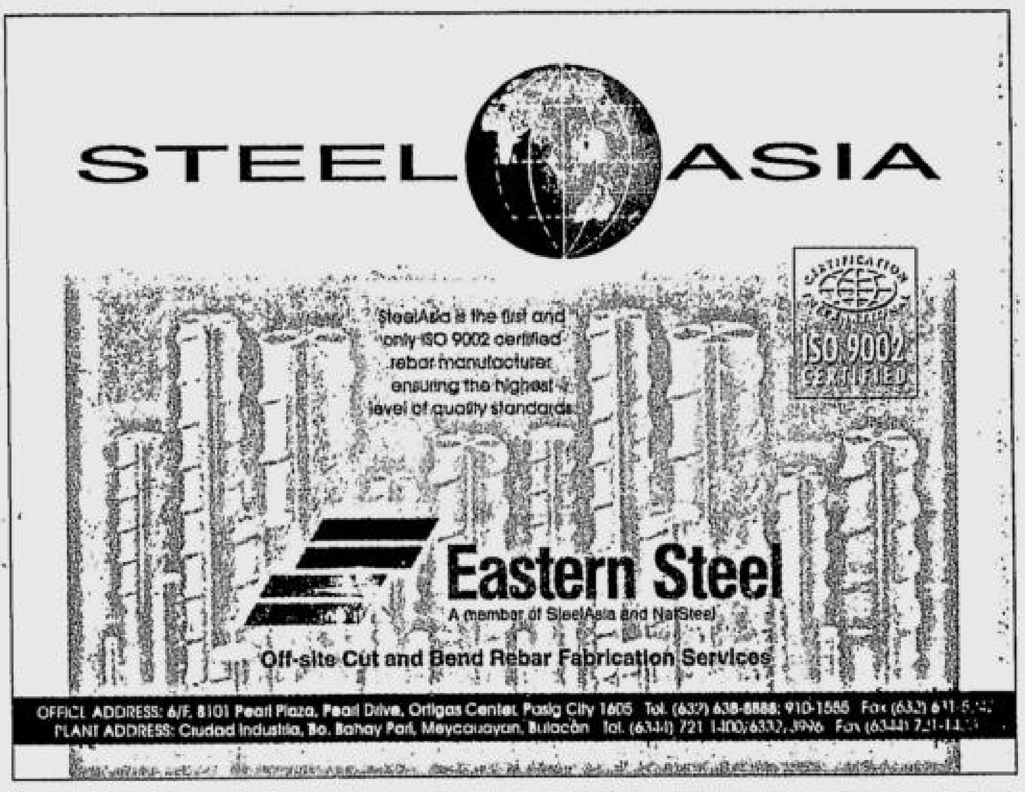
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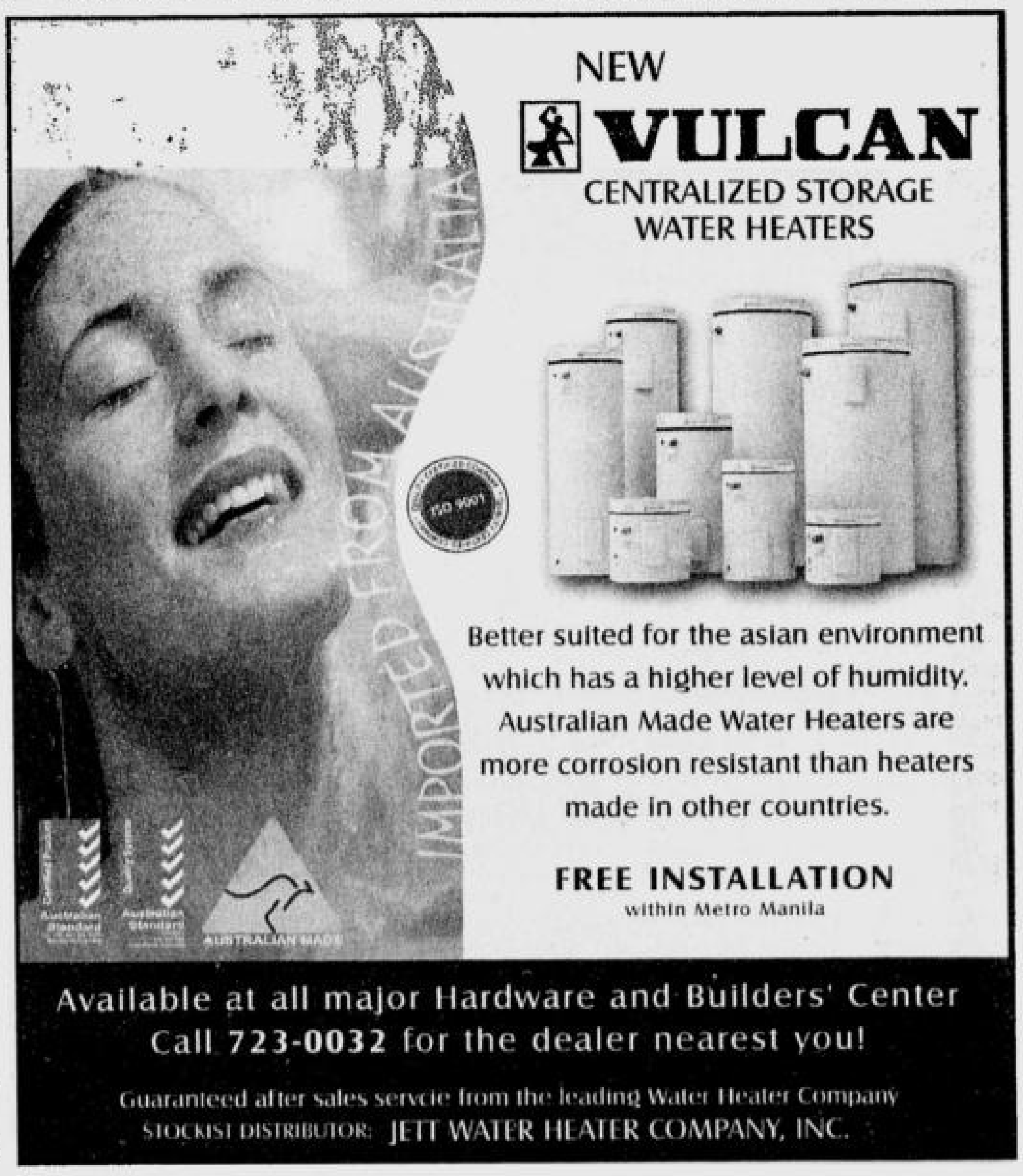
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BUSINESS

Merrill Lynch planning $500-M tier 2 capital

By Clarissa S. Batino

US investment firm Merrill Lynch & Co. Inc. is planning $500 million worth of investment in local banks to raise new funds through the so-called tier 2 capital.

Persons familiar with the matter said Merrill Lynch "is very interested in buying the tier 2 papers of banks."

The amount, he said, could easily reach about $500 million.

Merrill Lynch is one of the world's leading financial management and advisory companies, with total client assets of over $1.6 trillion in 44 countries.

Merrill Lynch shut down its Philippine brokerage unit—Merrill Lynch Securities Philippines Inc.—amid the continuing slump in the local stock market last year.

It sold its stockbrokerage to its local management team. The local unit later became an independent local brokerage named Philippine Equity Partners Securities Inc.

Merrill Lynch's plan to raise new funds through tier 2 capital is seen by industry observers as a move by the investment firm to again set up a substantial operation in the Philippines.

Tier 2 capital is also referred to as a "subordinated debt." It is an investment that behaves like a deposit because it earns a pre-determined rate, unlike a shareholder whose rate-of-return depends on a company's financial performance.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas is studying whether it can allow other forms of tier 2 capital other than the usual types of subordinated debts.

Banks normally raise tier 2 funds by issuing bonds similar to what the country's largest lender, Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co. did last year when it sold around $100 million worth of 10-year bonds to Singaporean firm Dunmore Asset Ltd.

Metrobank used the money it raised to buy long-term Philippine dollar bonds.

Equitable PCI Bank Inc., the country's No. 4 bank, has sought the central bank's approval to issue P5 billion and $100 million worth of tier 2 capital, while eighth-largest lender Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. and No. 10 Allied Banking Corp. have also submitted applications to issue tier 2 capital.

RCBC said it might issue more than P3 billion worth of tier 2 papers, while Allied Bank said it could raise about $100 million.

State-owned Land Bank of the Philippines also said it was considering tapping tier 2 funds to raise about P2 billion worth of fresh capital.

Landbank, however, was unsure whether its charter as a government bank would allow it to raise capital funds from the private sector.

The P7.8 billion in debts that the Philippine National Bank would convert into government equity, meanwhile, will also be treated like a tier 2 investment because the shares will be in the form of preferred convertible bonds.

The central bank has been encouraging local banks to increase their capital either through the usual equity infusion or through the so-called tier 2 money.

DTI slaps 3-year duty on ceramics

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE DEPARTMENT of Trade and Industry will impose a safeguard duty on ceramic tile imports on various countries over the next three years following a Tariff Commission ruling blaming the import surge for the domestic industry's losses.

In an order signed April 11, the trade department ordered the imposition of a definitive safeguard duty of P5.40 per kilogram on the first year, P4.30 per kilogram on the second year and P3.50 per kilogram on the third year.

The first year of the safeguard duty will include the 200-day provision duty imposed by the DTI on Jan. 9 this year.

The trade department's safeguard duty is in line with the request of the Ceramic Tiles Manufacturers Association, which has benefited substantially from the provisional duty over the last three months.

The DTI order, however, will only affect imports from China, Taiwan, Indonesia, Hong Kong and Malaysia.

It exempted tile imports from Japan and Europe from the safeguard duty because it did not consider exports from these countries as similar or directly competitive products.

The DTI was also forced to exclude a long list of countries from the safeguard duty due to restrictions set under the Safeguard Act.

DA defends meat safety requirement

By Christine A. Gaylican

THE DEPARTMENT of Agriculture is standing by its new safety requirement on meat imports, saying it is not violating any rules laid down by the World Trade Organization.

In a position paper, the National Meat Inspection Commission insisted that the WTO sanctioned Administrative Order 25, contrary to claims made earlier by the US Department of Agriculture.

The NMIC said the food safety and chain of custody compliance certificate requirement that the government laid down in December was compulsory among members of the WTO.

The order falls under a WTO provision that allows the implementation of a "sanitary or phytosanitary measure . . . to protect human, animal or plant life."

"This measure would further enhance the safety measures of our country because of the prevailing conditions in the international food supply situation," the NMIC said.

US Agricultural Attaché Michael Woolsey said earlier that the USDA would file a protest with the WTO should the Philippines refuse to withdraw AO 25.

Other exporters of meat products to the Philippines, namely Australia, Canada and Belgium were likely to make a similar move, Woolsey said.

"We will take this up before the WTO's SPS (sanitary and phytosanitary) committee if the Philippines doesn't withdraw the new measure. I can almost guarantee that's going to happen, so I hope they don't do it," he said.

Under the WTO's rules, the SPS committee will decide whether sufficient grounds exist for the United States to initiate formal proceedings against the Philippines.

Alvarez promotes use of MRT, LRT

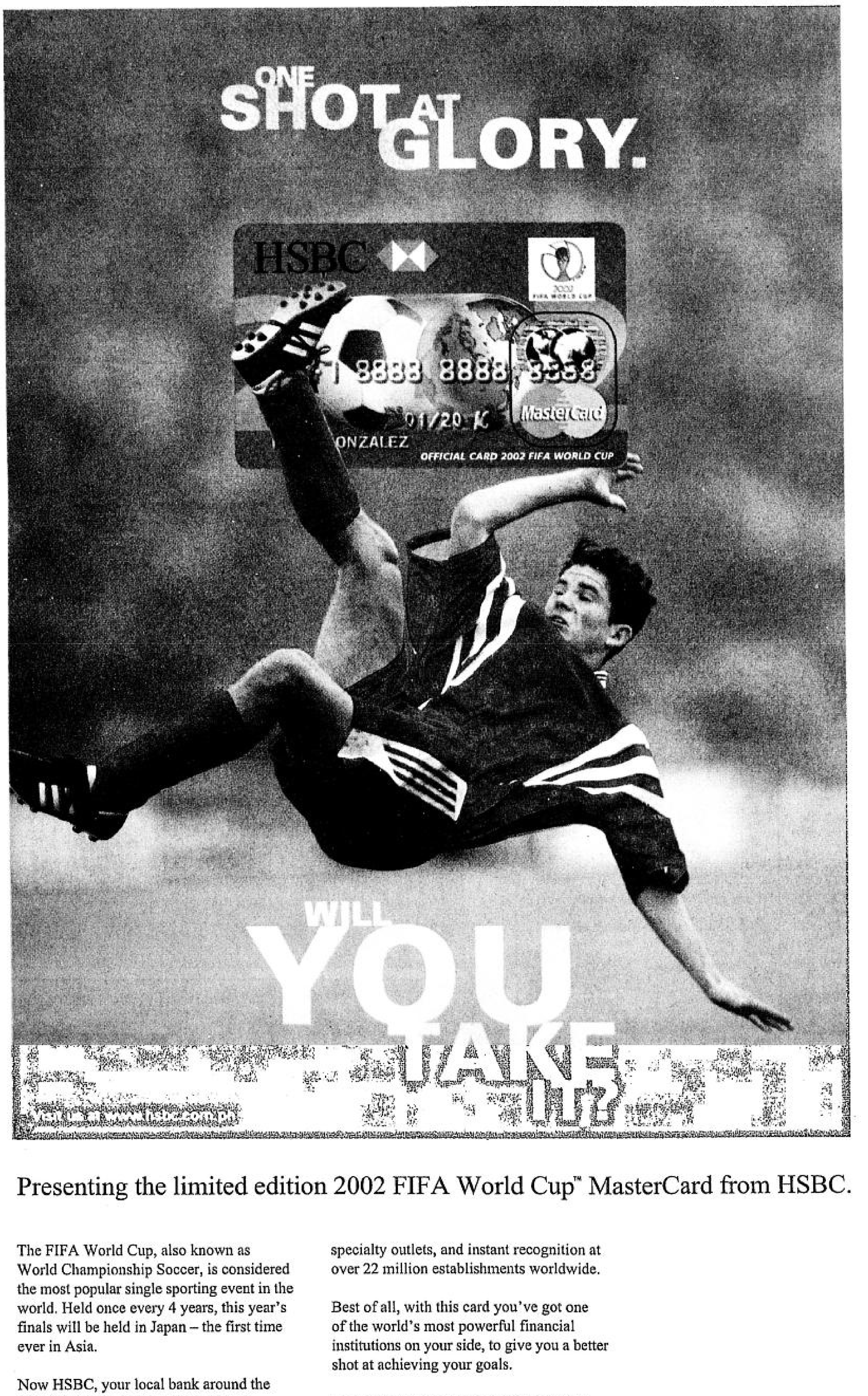
TRANSPORTATION Secretary Pantaleon Alvarez has cited mass transport systems, like the Edsa Metro Rail Transit 3 and Light Rail Transit, as ways to combat pollution and traffic congestion in Metro Manila.

At the First Policy Initiative in Transport (Point) conference in Bangkok, Thailand, Alvarez shared the country's "experience and best practices" in fighting pollution caused by fuel emissions.

He cited the passage of the Clean Air Act of 1999 and the Asian Development Bank-assisted Air Quality Improvement Sector Development Program as integral parts of the government's policy reform package toward a cleaner environment.

"One of the major components of the policy reform package is the provision for urban railway development, hence, the LRT-MRT projects to address the twin problem of traffic and air pollution in Metro Manila," he said in a statement issued in Manila after the conference.

Abigail L. Ho



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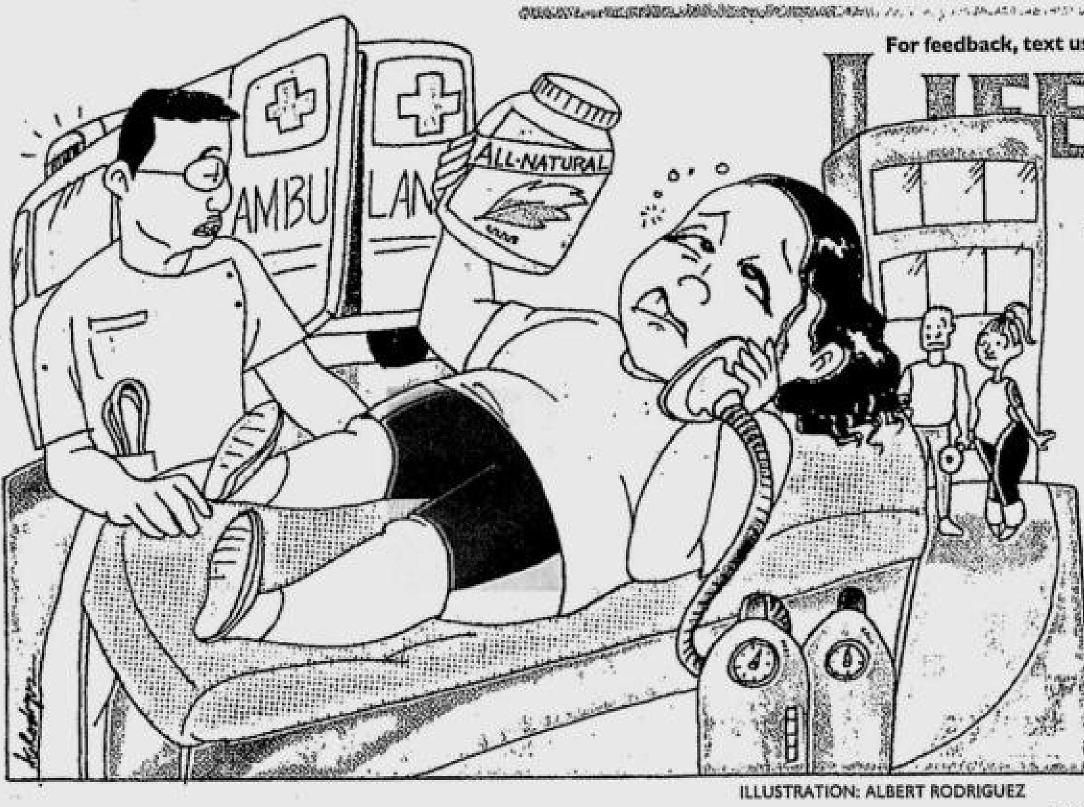

ILLUSTRATION: ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

> 'Consumers should be aware that just because a product is labeled natural or from an herbal source, it is not guaranteed to be safe'

5 things you should know about ephedrine

WELL AND GOOD

Tina Juan

LAST Tuesday, I watched a Discovery Channel special on herbal supplements. One of the stories was about the untimely death of Rosanna Porras, a 15-year-old Mexican-American who collapsed while playing soccer in 1998.

She had been taking an "energy pill" containing *ma huang* (the Chinese name of ephedra, the herbal form of ephedrine). She had a heart condition that neither her parents nor her doctor were aware of. She was in a coma for several days before she died. It was heartbreaking listening to her parents being interviewed. I have a teenage son and I can just imagine what it would be like to lose a child this way.

I had been getting some inquiries from readers about two popular weight-loss supplements containing ephedrine, so I took Porras' story as a "sign" that I should once again (I have written about this several times in the past years) tell my readers what they should know about ephedrine to protect themselves.

No testing

The first thing you need to know is that, according to Consumer Reports, a nonprofit organization devoted to the protection of consumers, "Any dietary supplement can be marketed without advance testing under current federal law. The only restriction: The label can't claim the product will treat, prevent or cure a disease. But the label can traffic in vague claims like "enhances energy" or "supports testosterone." If serious problems are reported, it is up to FDA to prove they're real before it can order the supplement off the market or impose other restrictions."

FDA has strict control over drugs, but not over herbs or other nutritional supplements. So the synthetic version of ephedrine requires a prescription (in some US states it can still be bought over the counter), but the herbal form ephedra or *ma huang* can be sold openly on the shelves of health food stores and supermarkets. Sounds familiar? We have the same situation here in the Philippines.

No assurance of safety

The second thing you need to know about ephedrine is that it has a valid medical use for asthma because of the drug's ability to open up the lungs. This is primarily what *ma huang* has been used for in traditional Chinese medicine.

Unfortunately, ephedrine (I will use the term generically for both the synthetic and herbal version) is now marketed for weight loss, bodybuilding and increased energy. Some unscrupulous manufacturers even advertise it as the legal substitute for the street drug Ecstasy.

Health Canada (the Canadian version of FDA) warns that you should get suspicious if you see products containing ephedrine that are marketed for appetite suppression, weight loss, metabolic enhancement, increased exercise endurance, body-building effects, euphoria, increase energy or wakefulness, or other stimulant effects. These products have no assurance of content, safety or effectiveness.

Adverse events

The third thing you need to know is that since 1994, FDA has received reports of 800 "adverse events" and 44 deaths associated with weight loss or energy-enhancing products containing ephedrine. Here are the facts from FDA:

- More than 100 different products of different formulations (ephedrine mixed with other herbs) were involved.
- The single most common element in all

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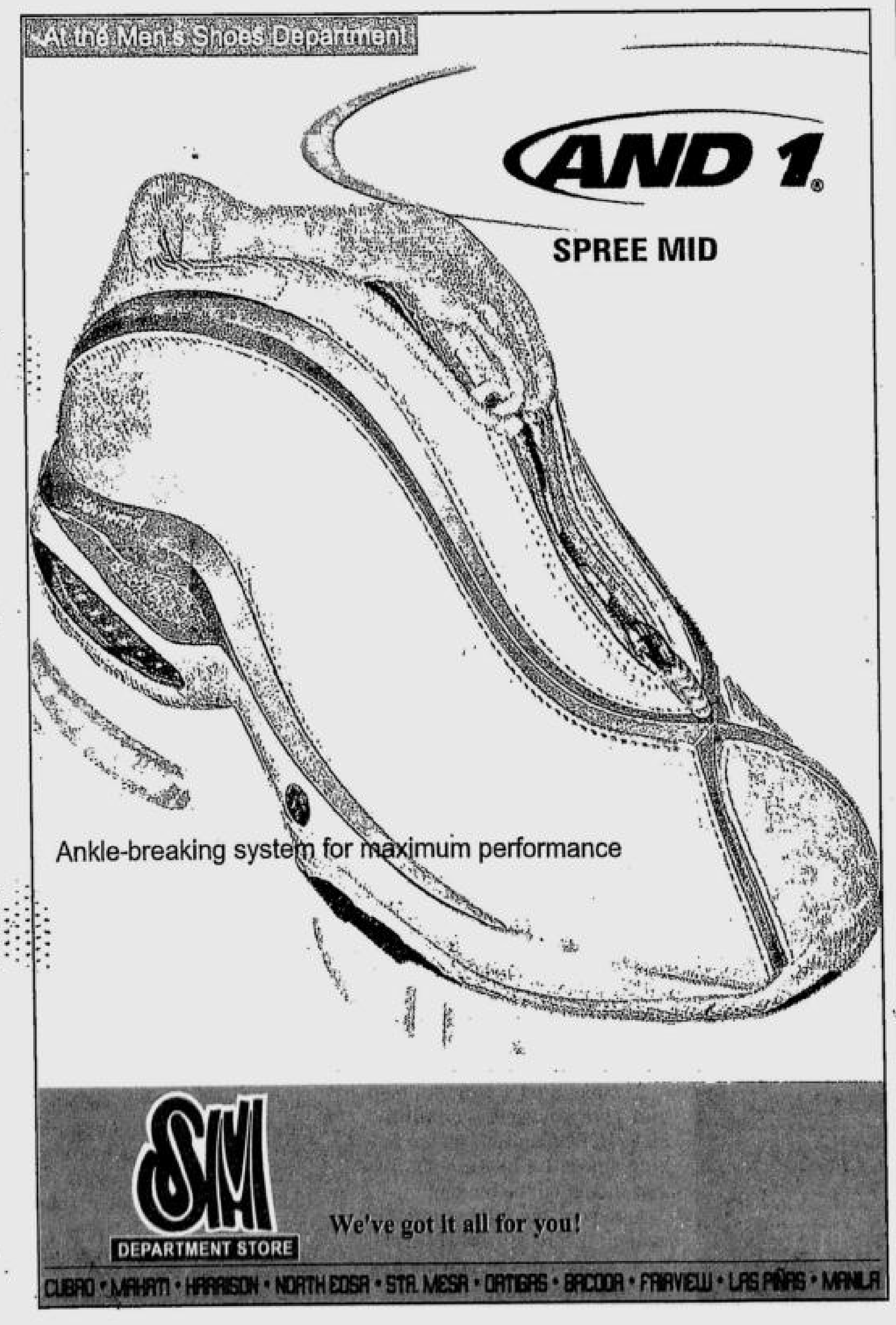
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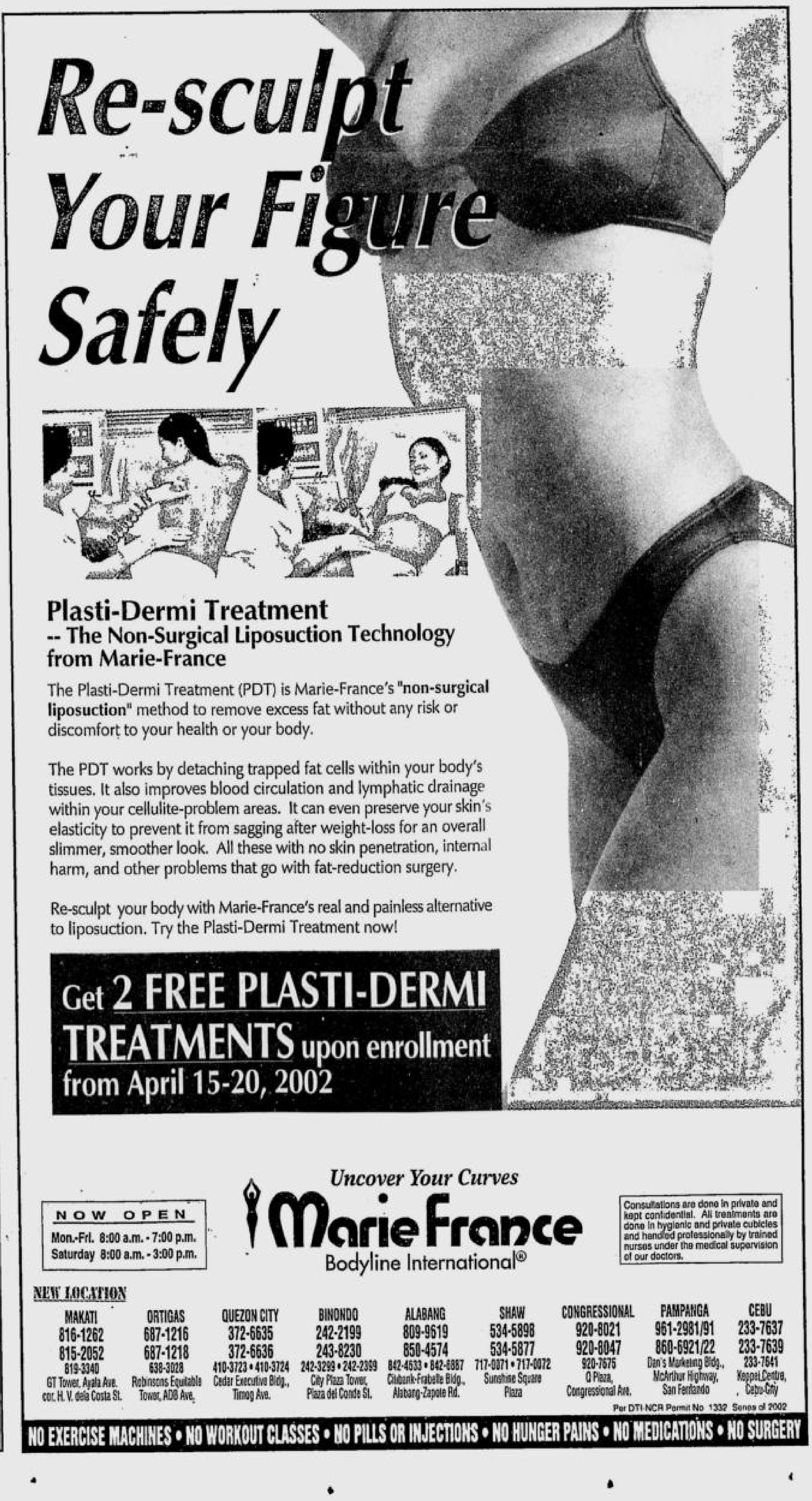
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Per DTI-NCR Permit No 1332 Series of 2002

NO EXERCISE MACHINES • NO WORKOUT CLASSES • NO PILLS OR INJECTIONS • NO HUNGER PAINS • NO MEDICATIONS • NO SURGERY

5 things you should know . . .

From page C1

the cases was that the products contained ephedrine (both synthetic and herbal).

- The adverse events included rapid and irregular heart rhythms, increased blood pressure, chest pain, anxiety, nervousness, tremor, hyperactivity and activity. What FDA called "clinically significant" conditions included heart attack, stroke, psychosis, seizure and death.
- The major causes of death were heart attacks and strokes. Some of the victims, like Porras, had underlying heart conditions but others were healthy young adults with normal hearts.
- 56 percent of the adverse events happened to people less than 40 years of age and 25 percent occurred in people between the ages of 40 and 49.
- 75 percent of the adverse events occurred in females. The FDA said this is because women are the predominant users of weight-loss supplements, though it might also reflect a difference in the way a woman's body metabolizes ephedrine compared to a man.
- 59 percent of the adverse events occurred within four weeks of starting to use the product. Fourteen percent occurred on the first day and a few cases on the initial dose.
- Adverse events and deaths occurred in cases of overdose and also in cases when used according to package directions and even in cases of lower than normal dosages. The FDA suspects that some individuals are more sensitive than others. It mentions a case of three young adult males who consumed similar amounts but only one of them died.
- Psychiatric effects like mania and psychosis were noted in people who had no family history of such and also in people who had a predisposition to manic depression and mood disorders.

Guidelines

The fourth thing you need to know is that in 1997, the FDA proposed guidelines to somehow make taking supplements with ephedrine a little safer. Unfortunately, not all the manufacturers followed this advice. Besides, judging from the above FDA report, what good are these guidelines if adverse events have happened to both young and old, healthy or unhealthy, with low or high dose? Anyway, if you still decide to take weight loss or energy supplements with ephedrine, at least try to follow these guidelines (As for myself, I don't believe it's worth taking the stuff at all.):

- Do not take products that contain both ephedrine and caffeine. Do not take ephedrine and continue to drink coffee or other drinks with caffeine. Mixing ephedrine and caffeine produces an effect similar to using amphetamines.
- Do not take products that have more than 8 mg per dose.
- Do not take more than 24 mg in 24 hours.
- Do not use supplements for more than seven days.
- Do not use ephedrine if you have heart disease, hypertension, thyroid disease, diabetes, enlarged prostate, anxiety or glaucoma.

Hidden sources

The fifth thing you need to know is that ephedrine and caffeine can "hide" under various herbs or plants listed in the label. Here is how to find them according to a report from Health Canada:

Herbs or plants containing ephedrine:

- Ephedra or *ma huang*
- *Ephedra sinica, Ephedra shennungiana, Ephedra gerardiana, Ephedra equisetina, Ephedra intermedia*
- *Sida cordifolia*

Herbs or plants containing caffeine:

- Coffee, *Coffea* species
- Green tea, *Camellia sinensis*
- *Guarana, Paullinea cupana*
- Mate, *Ilex paraguariensis*
- Cola nut (kola nut), *Cola nitida, Cola acuminata, Cola verticillata, Cola anomala*

Lastly, before you decide to take a supplement with ephedrine, think about these words from Dr. Michael Friedman, FDA Deputy Commissioner: "Consumers should be aware that just because a product is labeled 'natural' or from an herbal source, it is not guaranteed to be safe. The effects of ephedrine are potentially dangerous. We urge people to talk to their doctors before using dietary supplements containing ephedrine, and to always use them with caution."

* * *

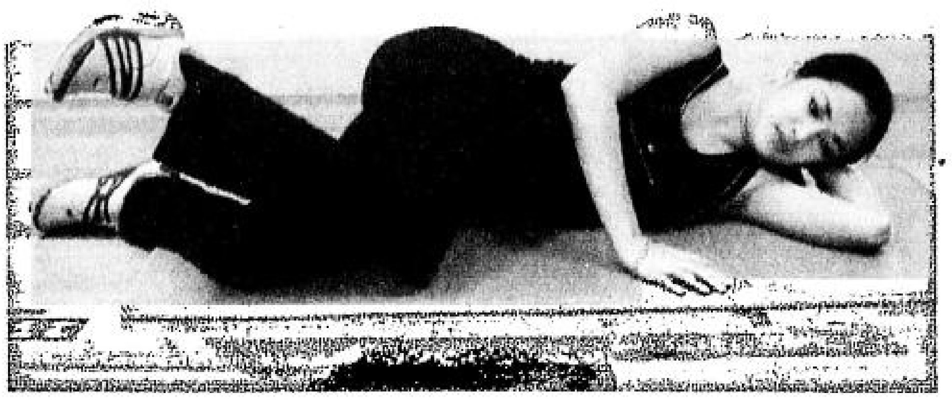
The Association of Fitness Professionals of the Phils. (AFPP) will hold a Provincial Fit Tour in Cagayan de Oro on April 24-26. Contact Julie Ang at (088) 857-5416 or e-mail Shirley Quejada at outfit@consultant.www.ph. The tour includes a two-day Basic Instructor Course and a one-day Fitness Workshop.

AFPP will also hold a Manila fitness seminar on April 20 at the Bahay ng Alumni, UP Diliman, QC. Topics will include "Yogilates," "Aerobics for Kids," "Thyroid Problems and Exercise," "Sports Training for Basketball Players," "Anatomy of an Aerobics Class." Call Doris Rivera at 850-7647.

The Sports Medicine Association of the Phils. will hold its 11th Annual Convention titled "Global Trends and Local Issues in Sports" on May 17 and 18 at the Manila Midtown Hotel, Ermita. Call 521-9123; fax 522-2374 or e-mail sportsmedphil@yahoo.com.

For inquiries or past articles and exercises, visit www.tinajuanfitness.com

EXERCISE OF THE WEEK



Side leg lift with inward rotation

FIRMS and tones the hip muscles.

Equipment:

Exercise mat and ankle weights (optional)

Exercise technique:

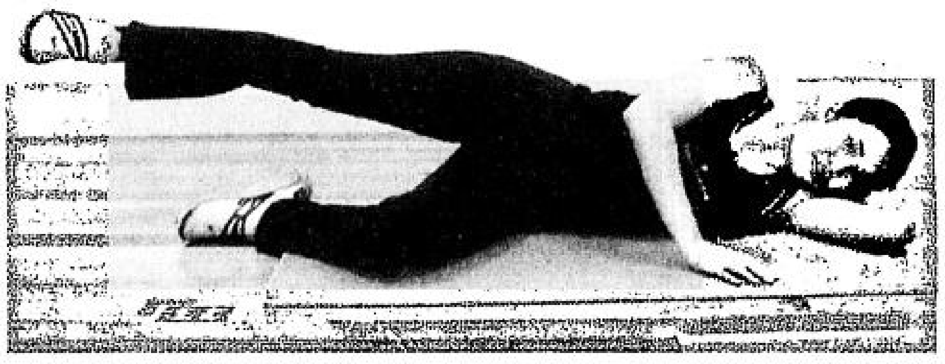
1. Lie on your side with one arm under your head, the other arm on the floor for balance, and both knees bent in a 45° angle.
2. Inwardly rotate your top leg so that the knee is almost touching the floor and the sole of your foot is facing the ceiling.
3. Straighten your leg in line with your torso and higher than hip level.
4. Do the desired number of repetitions then do the other side.

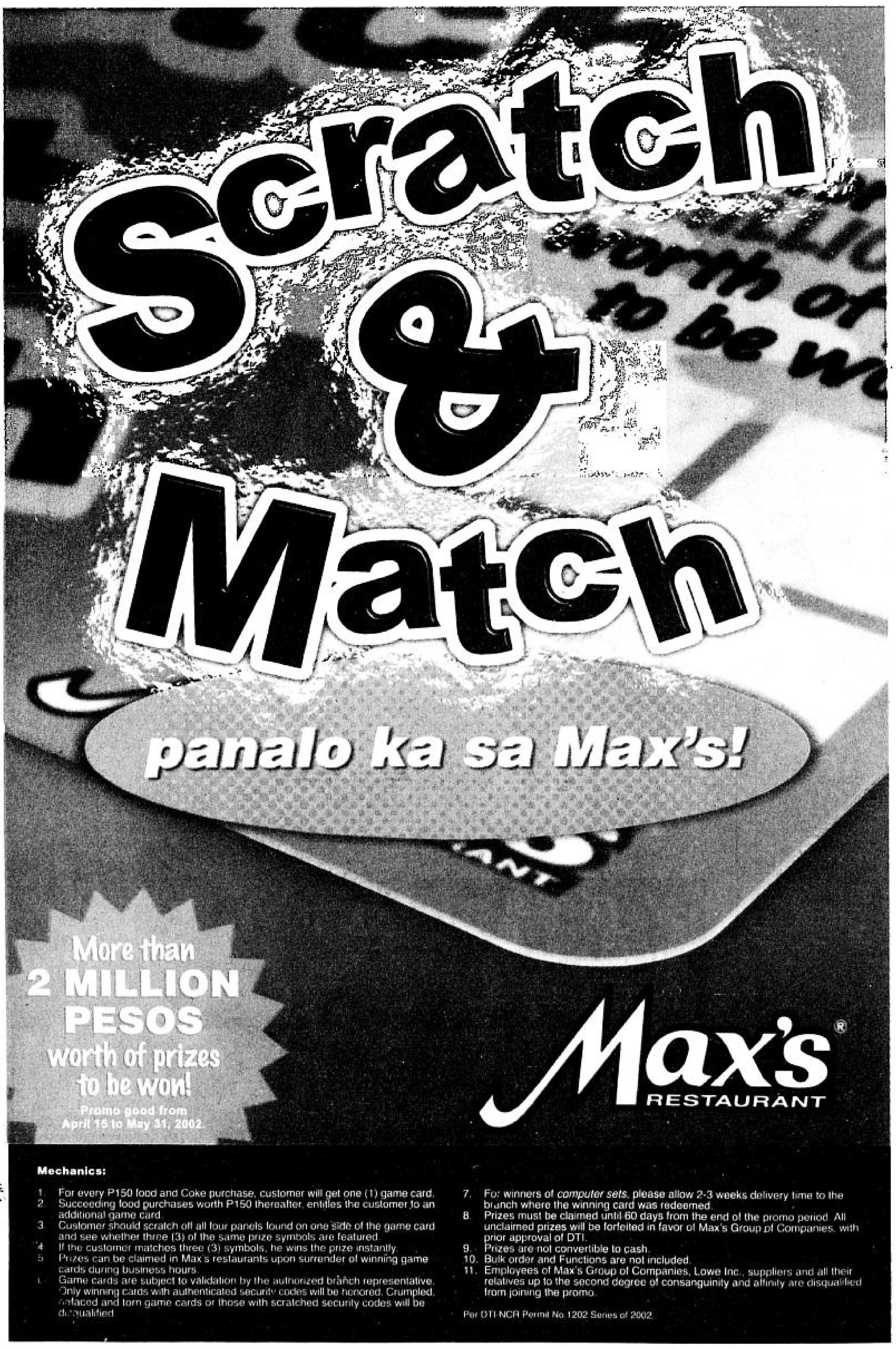
Performance tips:

1. Avoid pulling your knee toward your chest. To make sure that you have been doing it right, your knee should be almost touching the floor and your foot pointing to the ceiling.
2. Avoid using jerky sudden movements. Use slow, deliberate moves so the hip muscles have to work harder.

Repetitions:

Do 15-20 repetitions per side.

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Max's RESTAURANT

Mechanics:

1. For every P150 food and Coke purchase, customer will get one (1) game card.
2. Succeeding food purchases worth P150 thereafter, entitles the customer to an additional game card.
3. Customer should scratch off all four panels found on one side of the game card and see whether three (3) of the same prize symbols are featured.
4. If the customer matches three (3) symbols, he wins the prize instantly.
5. Prizes can be claimed in Max's restaurants upon surrender of winning game cards during business hours.
6. Game cards are subject to validation by the authorized branch representative. Only winning cards with authenticated security codes will be honored. Crumpled, defaced and torn game cards or those with scratched security codes will be disqualified.
7. For winners of *computer sets*, please allow 2-3 weeks delivery time to the branch where the winning card was redeemed.
8. Prizes must be claimed until 60 days from the end of the promo period. All unclaimed prizes will be forfeited in favor of Max's Group of Companies, with prior approval of DTI.
9. Prizes are not convertible to cash.
10. Bulk order and Functions are not included.
11. Employees of Max's Group of Companies, Lowe Inc., suppliers and all their relatives up to the second degree of consanguinity and affinity are disqualified from joining the promo.

Per DTI-NCR Permit No 1202 Series of 2002.

Today is the first day of the rest of your healthy life

INSIDE OUT

Cory Quirino

CAN eating more and moving less be the cause of two million deaths a year in a developing world? Hard to believe, but true. That's the bad news. In a recent press conference, Dr. Shigeru Omi, World Health Organization regional director, said, "The biggest epidemic of our time is the product not of run-amuck virus but our rapidly changing lifestyles and a pattern to eat more and move less."

Diseases such as diabetes, heart disease, stroke and cancers associated with a sedentary lifestyle and unhealthy diet "account for six out of 10 deaths in Asia and the Pacific" and "as obesity levels go up, health and well-being spiral downward."

Today, physical inactivity has become one of the leading causes of death and disability worldwide. The reason being that as countries begin to urbanize, more and more people hold desk jobs and children spend more time on the computer.

The good news: The truth is, it is never too late to embark on a wellness lifestyle. All you need to do is start right now. Not tomorrow, but today. How does one begin? Try this exercise to connect with yourself.

Mirror, mirror

Whenever I am asked just how to get a good start on things, I recommend going back to basics—work with what you have, and that's your body.

1. Stand before a mirror in the bathroom. Stripping naked before your own self is already a positive step toward confronting the issue of obesity or being overweight. Looking at your reflection sans clothes helps you overcome any sense of denial you might have about your state of health or mind.
2. Study every curve of your body and see where improvements might be made.
3. Make a pact with yourself and give yourself a deadline. Mean it. Remember, you are making a promise to yourself, one that should not be broken.
4. Repeat the following affirmation: "Every day, in every way, I am working toward having a fit and attractive body."

Challenge yourself

1. Get a piece of clothing, a dress or a pair of pants that you once wore when you were slimmer. Never mind if that was five, maybe 10 years ago.
2. Hang it in the bathroom where you can see it each day. Every time you see it, you must declare, "One day soon I will wear this."
3. Cut down on your carbo, sweets, salt and fat intake by half.
4. Start brisk walking a minimum of 30 minutes a day.
5. If you can enroll in a gym, better. The minimum number of visits should be three times weekly.
6. Practice patience. Losing weight doesn't happen overnight. It takes discipline and dedication to get there. You will soon see improvements gradually as you progress.

Body slimmer

It is said that soaking in a tub of seaweed is not only good for stimulating the skin but also for tightening and moisturizing it. That's the reason for the seaweed wrap in most spas.

3 handfuls of fresh seaweed
1 tubful of warm water

Soak yourself in a tub of seaweed for 15 minutes. Relax and enjoy this bounty from the sea. Grab a bunch and place it on your tummy and other flabby parts of your body. Rinse with cold water. If seaweed is not appealing to you, substitute it with 3 cups of raw oatmeal. After the bath, use the remaining oatmeal as a body and facial mask.

How about this instant tummy flattener? It's an overnight wonder. Eat no carbohydrate in the evening (no bread, pasta, rice, cake and crackers). The next morning, your stomach will be less bloated—promise! If it works for me, it should work for you. Remember there is a solution for every problem—especially if it is your weight. But then again, a problem is simply a situation that needs your attention. So, pay attention to yourself once and for all. It's high time you did.

Love and light, my friends.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Common questions asked about astral travel

INNER AWARENESS

Jaime T. Licauco

ASTRAL projection or out-of-body experience (OOBE) is actually a very natural and common occurrence. There is nothing supernatural or paranormal about it. Everybody does it while asleep without knowing it's happening to him or her. Most of the time the person regards it merely as a dream.

Sometimes a person dreaming he is out of his body wakes up and sees his physical body asleep on the bed and panics. He desperately tries to get back to his body and finds he can't move. He is paralyzed. He shouts, but no sound comes out of his mouth until, finally, he is able to move a toe or finger and wakes up feeling exhausted and afraid. Doctors call this "sleep paralysis," but it is not ordinary paralysis. To me it's a case of astral projection.

Every now and then, I receive questions relating to experiences of going out of the body. I have tackled many of these questions in this column and on my Sunday evening radio program over dzMM, but still many questions crop up. So I'd like to deal with these recurrent questions hoping readers will clip the answers for future reference.

What really is astral projection?

A human being is composed of several vibratory or energy levels, which are called "bodies" or "vehicles" by some Eastern esoteric schools. One of these energy vehicles is the astral body. There are six other bodies but let us not concern ourselves with them for the time being. Each of these so-called bodies has its own consciousness and we can become aware of each level through certain practices or exercises.

The astral body detaches itself when we sleep. In fact, my theory is that sleep happens because the astral body is somehow slightly ajar from the physical body, maybe half in and half out. When it fully detaches itself from the physical body and floats out, we call that astral travel or out-of-body experience. Most of the time, when we dream of flying, it is because our astral body is actually flying, although our physical body is lying in bed sleeping.

The astral body is connected to the physical body by a band of energy called the "silver cord" or the "astral cord." This silver cord is infinitely elastic and may not be cut by any physical means. The astral body can travel to the farthest reaches of the universe without any problem. It will only be cut or severed when a person dies. The silver cord appears as a luminous silvery band of energy that looks like a cord. The point of connection is either the solar plexus or the third eye chakra.

If it is true we go out of our physical body and travel in the evening, how come we are usually unaware of it?

There are four ways the astral body is projected out of the physical body, namely, "involuntary and unconscious" (the most common type); "involuntary and conscious" (This is when we spontaneously go out and wake up in the astral world. We may see our physical body being left behind); "voluntary and unconscious" (This is when we deliberately project our astral body out of the physical body but it remains asleep in the astral world. We are not aware we succeeded in getting out), and the last is "voluntary and conscious" (This is the best type of projection and can be done by anyone after some serious practice usually under the guidance of someone who knows what he is doing).

Deliberate astral projection should not be attempted by anyone without proper guidance and preparation for there can be some dangers attendant to such practice. If OOBE happens spontaneously, it is usually safe and harmless.

If I find myself out of the body, is there a chance I will not be able to go back to my physical body?

Very unlikely you will not go back unless it is time for you to die. Spontaneous astral projection, as mentioned above, is usually safe. In fact the most difficult thing to do when we are out of the body is to stay out. Because once we think of our physical body, we zoom right back to it as quickly as a thought.

Why can't I move my physical body when I try to get back to my body? And why can't somebody hear me when I shout?

When you panic when out of the body and attempt to suddenly return to your physical body, you are not in vibratory sync with it. Therefore you can't move because the two bodies are not aligned. Your panic creates the dissonance or misalignment. If you relax everything will be all right. That's the same reason no sound comes out of your throat. You are not in sync with your physical body. Try to drive your car while you are out of it and see if you can do it. That's essentially the same thing that happens.

To be continued next week

Address letters to this column to 308 Prince Plaza I, 106 Legaspi St., Greenbelt, Makati City or e-mail jlicauco@geocities.com. Visit my website at http://j.licauco.tripod.com. Listen to my dzMM radio program every Sunday, 6-8 p.m.

Take Charge Doc!

Nicky S. Montoya, M.D.

Looking to learn more about your benefits under your MEDICard coverage? Do you want to be clear on the procedures, which allow you to avail of MEDICard's services? Get your information straight from MEDICard's Medical Director, DR. NICKY S. MONTOYA every Tuesday.

FAQs (frequently asked questions)

I enrolled my family under MEDICard's HMO program. I noted, when I received the membership cards that the effectivity date of our policy was more than a week after I applied. Is this correct?

Yes it is. MEDICard follows standard cut-off dates in assigning effectivity of members based on the date of their enrollment. From 11 to 25 of the month, member's policy effects on the 1st of the following month. For those who enroll between the 26th to the 10th of the next month, program effects on the 16th. This cut off dates also applies to group and corporate programs.

Meet your MEDICard Team

UP College of Medicine graduate, **Dr. Anna Dolores Bautista-Lavaga** has been a part of MEDICard's Medical Service Team since 2000. She specializes in Pediatric Medicine where she received her residency training in UP-PGH. She considers herself as one of the young and dynamic pediatricians who keep abreast with the latest development in her chosen field. She also views her profession as God-given, and finds joy in her involvement in various medical missions. Dr. Lavaga is a Diplomate to the Philippine Pediatric Society and a member to the Philippine Medical Association and the Quezon City Medical Society. Visit her clinic for your consultation needs at room 217, The World Citi Medical Center (formerly QCMC), from Mondays to Saturdays 10 AM to 12 noon.

Contract Signing

MOTOROLA COMMUNICATIONS PHILIPPINES, INC. signed its corporate healthcare agreement with MEDICard in a contract signing ceremony held at the New World Renaissance Hotel last April 11. Present during the ceremony were (Seated L-R) Dr. Nicky Montoya (MEDICard Medical Director), Luis S. Montoya (MEDICard EVP & GM), Dr. Nicanor Montoya (MEDICard President), Joju Quejada (Motorola Director) & Peter Buenaseda (Motorola Country HR Manager); (Standing L-R) Voltaire Victoria (MEDICard Marketing & Sales Manager), Pia Reyes (MEDICard Corporate Accounts Manager), Marlyn Delgado (MEDICard Account Manager), Miriam Villafuerte (MEDICard Asst. Manager-Marketing Services), Luz Barcelon (MEDICard Account Executive), Julie Lamera (Motorola Corporate Communications and Public Affairs Specialist), Armie Olalia (Motorola HR Asst.), Martin Aurellano (Motorola Accounting Shared Services Manager) & Francis Swinton (Motorola Purchasing & General Services Manager)

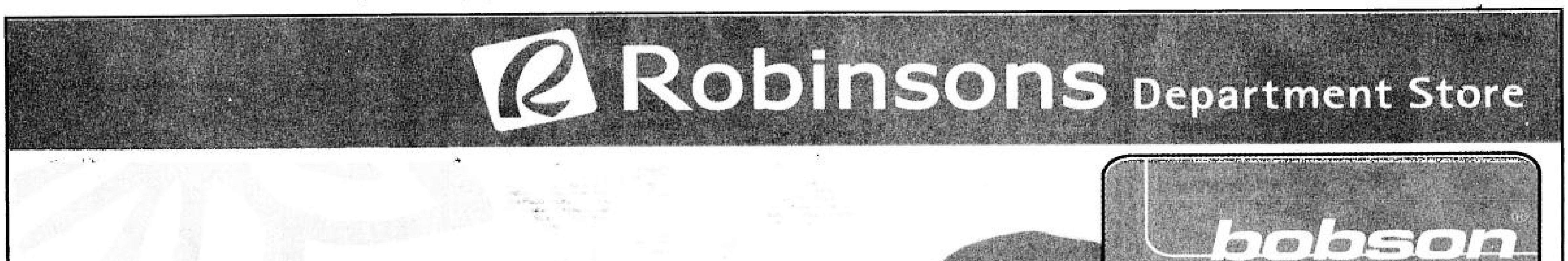
We encourage all MEDICard members to voice out their concerns and issues at hand. BE HEARD AND BE READ. You can write DR. NICKY S. MONTOYA at 9/F Sagittarius Bldg. H.V. de la Costa St., Salcedo Village, Makati City or e-mail him at inquiry@medicardphils.com. **For feedback on availment of our services, e-mail us at** feedback@medicardphils.com.

For inquiries on individual or family membership, dial 840-2020 local 2017 and look for Ms. Joy Mendiola. For group or corporate membership, dial local 2049 and look for a membership consultant.

TEXT MEDICard for your queries: 0917-7518365 (Globe) or 0919-2476240 (Smart). Please don't forget to include your complete name and landline number where MEDICard could reach you. Log on to www.medicardphils.com.

MEDICard is the first and only HMO in the Philippines and the whole Asian region to be ISO 9002 certified.

ISO 9002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Scents & Ideas Oil / Jar 20% off Watsons Mall outlets only

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Milcu 40g WOW! BUY ONE TAKE ONE

In 2 It Lipstick WOW! BUY ONE TAKE ONE

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Airily Pantyshields 16's / 20's WOW! BUY 3 TAKE ONE

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DOH-BFAD PERMIT NO. 0280 SERIES OF 2002

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